

TANGMERE

10/10/39.

No. 92 Fighter Squadron was on this date re-formed as a night fighter Squadron at R.A.F. Station TANGMERE. It is to be equipped with BLENHEIM aircraft, firing 5 guns forward, and one gun in the rear turret, powered by two MERCURY VIII engines. The establishment will be 21 Officers and Airmen Pilots, 2 non flying Officers and 209 other ranks.

11/10/39

Various airmen were posted totalling in all 98.

12/10/39

COMMANDING OFFICER BUSHELL

F/Lt. R.J. BUSHELL was posted to command the Squadron with effect from 10/10/39. This Officer came from No. 601. FIGHTER SQUADRON AUXILIARY AIR FORCE and is the first A.A.F. Officer to be posted to command and form a new squadron. As a result of various conversations with those in higher authority, he was able to persuade No. 11(F) GROUP to allow him to take two Officers from his old Squadron with him, and it was arranged that P/O. PATRICK GREEN should be posted as the first flight commander and that P/O. J. MUNRO-HINDS should be the second Officer and section leader. F/Lt. BUSHELL spoke to the station commander

R.A.F. Station, TANGMERE W/Cdr. I. BERTRAM by telephone and arranged to report for duty on 15/10/39.

13/10/39

Nothing to report.

14/10/39

Nothing to report.

15/10/39

F/Lt. BUSHELL reported for duty, and discovered that the squadron consisted of himself, 3 airman pilots (565197 Sgt. PRATT, 741920 Sgt. PEARCE, 740822 Sgt. ALLEN) the latter two coming from the Volunteer Reserve, and 98 other ranks. The senior NCOs' are 314109 F/Sgt. BENNET, disciplinarian, 355016 F/Sgt. HUGHES, Fitter 1 who has come across from No. 43(F) Squadron here, and 362993 F/Sgt. LEECH. There is no office equipment, no aeroplanes and indeed no equipment of any sort. The Squadron is housed in the offices and hangars vacated by No. 1 SQUADRON who have gone with the A.A.S.F. to FRANCE. The other two SQUADRONS stationed at TANGMERE are No. 43 (F) SQUADRON commanded by S/Ldr. R. BAINE and No. 605 COUNTY OF WARWICK (F) SQUADRON A.A.F. commanded by S/Ldr. LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE. MC. As previously mentioned the station is commanded by W/Cmdr. IAN BERTRAM. The COMMANDING OFFICER of this Squadron was tonight very hospitably entertained at TANGMERE cottage by LORD and LADY WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE and other members of No. 605

SQUADRON and retired to his bed at a late hour, feeling that TANGMERE was the best station to be found in the best country in the best of all possible wars.

16/10/39

The COMMANDING OFFICER began his duties and constituted himself his own ADJUTANT, FLIGHT COMMANDER, ENGINEER OFFICER, PARACHUTE OFFICER, and MAP OFFICER. In his combined capacity of Adjutant and Flight commander he visited the adjutant of No. 605 SQUADRON. P/O. LONGSDON, who was extremely helpful and lent him a HIND aircraft to give the three Sgt. Pilots some flying on. None of these pilots has any experience at all on twin engine aircraft and efforts are being made to have them sent on a conversion course. The COMMANDING OFFICER went by air to DEBDEN with S/Ldr. PERRY to collect a HURRICANE aircraft for 605 SQUADRON and there saw P/O. LIDDELL-SIMPSON (ex 601 SQUADRON), whom he is anxious to obtain as his ADJUTANT.

17/10/39

Information received that all equipment will be sent direct from Maintenance Units for the formation of new units. In the meantime, there is still nothing and the COMMANDING OFFICER and Cpl. BURTON of the orderly room are scraping along on borrowed and scrounged material. Stationery and publication demands have been put in but it is anticipated that considerable delay will ensue before their arrival, and in the meantime, returns and correspondence are written on any odd piece of paper that can

be found. These words are being written on forms borrowed from 43 SQUADRON. The Sgt. Pilots fly the HIND which gives them something to do.

18/10/39.

The COMMANDING OFFICER visited F/Lt. WARD (ex 601 SQUADRON) at THORNEY ISLAND where he is in charge of the coastal Anti Aircraft Co-Operation Unit with ANSONS. He has promised that if pilots are sent over the day he will give them something to do. This will at least show them what a twin looks like, and how it flies. F/Lt. WILSON from 11 GROUP visited the station and promised the COMMANDING OFFICER that efforts would be made to supply the squadron with some form of twin for training purposes.

19/10/39

The Sgt. Pilots continue to fly the HIND and are learning the sector.

20/10/39

F/O. GREEN and P/O. MUNRO-HINDS reported for duty from 601 SQUADRON and this enabled the COMMANDING OFFICER to relieve himself of the posts of FLIGHT COMMANDER and ADJUTANT which were allocated respectively to the above named officers. There are still no signs of any aeroplanes or equipment. The SQUADRON'S officers are to be housed partly in Nos. 6 and 7 Officers married quarters and the COMMANDING OFFICER has taken possession of 7 O.M.Q where F/O. GREEN and P/O. MUNRO-

HINDS will also live. Indeed the COMMANDING OFFICER and his first two officers repaired there in the evening and celebrated with considerable élan the re-birth of 92 SQUADRON of the Auxiliary Air Force. It is devoutly to be hoped that 601 will be proud of her offspring and that the said offspring will grow up in that spirit of hardy independence so characteristic of its parent.

21/10/39

Information received that ten Pilot Officers and three Sgt. Pilots are being posted to the Squadron direct from 11 and 13 F.T.S. Children though they be it is hoped by some divine providence they will have flown twins.

22/10/39

The following pilots reported for duty ex 13 F.T.S. A/P/O'S BARTLEY, BRYSON, HILL, EDWARDS. All these pilots have experience of twin engine aircraft having flown some 80 - 100 hours on them. Divine providence has intervened. A signal was received today that F/O. V.G.L.D. BYRNE ex 74 SQUADRON at HORNCHURCH is being posted as the second flight Commander. The COMMANDING OFFICER has made arrangements with 11 GROUP that he be attached to 601 SQUADRON in order to be converted on to BLENHEIMS. Still no news of any aeroplanes.

23/10/39

The following further pilots reported for duty ex 11 F.T.S A/P/O's FRAZER P.C., WITMARSH R.J., WILLIAMS D.E. Sgts. 565689 EYLES and 566171 HAIGH. All those pilots have likewise had

experience on twins. Efforts are now being made to have all those pilots sent on a conversion course to BLENHEIMS. W/Comdr. MULHOLLAND from FIGHTER COMMAND visited the station, and saw the COMMANDING OFFICER. He promised that aircraft would be allotted to the Squadron immediately and that a dual should be sent to us.

24/10/39

Signal received that six aircraft can be accepted by this squadron forthwith. Things would seem to be moving. The squadron is however still without any equipment and it is feared that a situation may well arise where the Squadron is in possession of aircraft with nothing to maintain them. No Stationery or publications have as yet been received.

25/10/39

The COMMANDING OFFICER and F/O. GREEN went to ST. ATHANS in a BATTLE where the COMMANDING OFFICER saw S/Ldr. RHYS-JONES who is in charge of 11 GROUP pool. No pilots are trained on twins at ST. ATHANS but a BLENHEIM conversion flight is being formed at HENDON, and as three of the pilots posted to this Squadron with no twin experience are at the 11 GROUP pool at the moment, the COMMANDING OFFICER asked that they immediately be sent to HENDON. The COMMANDING OFFICER collected a HURRICANE for No. 605 Squadron and arranged to exchange the Townsend ring on the GAUNTLET lent to us by 601 SQUADRON. This important piece of equipment developed a large hole on a flight F/O. GREEN made yesterday to

collect LADY WILLOUGHBY DE BROKES' furs from WARWICKSHIRE. S.H. CARY reported for duty as squadron ADJUTANT. In the COMMANDING OFFICER'S absence he was seen by P/O. MUNRO-HINDS and it had appeared that he had been called back from his civilian job at six hours notice, he had no uniform, he was given a week's leave in order to put his private affairs in order. The COMMANDING OFFICER dined extremely well with the STATION COMMANDER and then the party went on to one of LADY WILLOUGHBY DE BROKES' soirées at TANGMERE COTTAGE where a good and rough time was had by all.

26/10/39

Signal received to send six pilots on the conversion course at HENDON and A/P/O'S BARTLY, WHITMARSH, WILLIAMS, FRAZER, Sgt. EYLES, and Sgt. HAIGH were sent the same day. The COMMANDING OFFICER spoke on the telephone to P/O. WOODRUFF who is OFFICER COMMANDING the conversion flight, and who used to be ASSISTANT ADJUTANT to 604 and asked him to push them through first.

27/10/39

F/O. GREEN took the BATTLE and two Sgt. Pilots to CASTLE BROMWICH to collect two TUTORS for 605. The BATTLE burst a tyre and he had a long and draughty ride home in one of the TUTORS. Things are really coming along, signal received that eight BLENHEIMS allotted to the squadron from 29 M.U. at ASTON DOWN. The COMMANDING OFFICER has made arrangements to collect the first three on Monday 30th. No. 92 is sprouting her

wings, there are still no tool kits or spares and we shall have to muddle along in the meantime on what we can scrounge and borrow.

28/10/39

Signal received that a further five pilots posted to the Squadron. This brings us up to our full establishment, if we could only get some equipment, we might be able to do something. As it is the squadron has twelve untrained pilots sitting at TANGMERE with nothing to do.

29/10/39

The COMMANDING OFFICER collected the Townend ring for the GAUNTLET from ST. ATHANS and landed to re-fuel at Old SARUM on his return. There he learnt that at ANDOVER there are various dual BLENHEIMS in the G.R. conversion flight. Something must be done about this.

30/10/39

The following officers reported for duty; A/P/O's DRUMMOND, and M.V. DUGDALE ex 11 F.T.S. and flight cadets R.H. HOLLAND, A.R. WRIGHT, and P.H.G. LEARMOND ex CRANWELL. These pilots have likewise had experience on twins. The COMMANDING OFFICER, F/O. GREEN and P/O. MUNRO-HINDS attempted to get to ASTON DOWN in the BATTLE, to collect the BLENHEIMS, but had to turn back owing to weather.

31/10/39

The AIR OFFICER COMMANDING visited the station and promised the COMMANDING OFFICER he would do his best about getting us a dual. The weather was too bad to get to ASTON DOWN, therefore still no BLENHEIMS. Arrangements have been made to send two BLENHEIMS to HENDON for our pilots on the conversion flight.

01/11/39.

Flying Officer BRINTON posted as Adjutant, from surplus to Establishment, 605 Squadron. Detailed to F/Lt. SIMPSON, Adjutant 43 SQUADRON for a little General Instruction.

02/11/39

Nothing to report.

03/11/39

General Inspection by AIR MARSHAL SIR CHARLES BURNETT. In the absence of the Commanding Officer, on leave, questions regarding the formation difficulties etc. of the Squadron, were satisfactorily answered by F/Lt. GREEN. F/Lt. GREEN and PILOT OFFICER MUNRO-HINDS collected the Squadron's first two Blenheim aircraft - Nos. L.6726 and L.6727 from Aston Down. They flew down in a HIND of 605 Squadron, which they left at ASTON DOWN.

04/11/39

Pilot Officer MUNRO-HINDS took 605 Squadron's BATTLE Aircraft No. L. 20818 to Nether Avon. He was forced down by bad weather for a short time at Boscombe Down. F/Lt. GREEN who had intended to bring Pilot Officer MUNRO-HINDS back in a Blenheim, was obliged to return to TANGMERE by bad weather. Pilot Officer MUNRO-HINDS accordingly spent a fairly comfortable night at Nether Avon. During the day instruction without Dual Blenheims was given to non-operationally Blenheim trained Pilots. P/O. CARY reported back for duty, but due to a conversation between the COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. HOLDEN of Headquarters 11 Group, this posting is now cancelled.

05/11/39

SQUADRON LEADER BUSHELL, F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. MUNRO-HINDS collected two more Blenheims from ASTON DOWN, by flying over together in one Blenheim. One Blenheim waiting for us at ASTON DOWN was found unsatisfactory in one engine, but this has since been rectified.

06/11/39

A guard on aircraft in the Hangars was this day instituted. S/Ldr. BUSHELL, F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. MUNRO-HINDS attempted to fly three Blenheims to Hendon with the idea of leaving two there for solo flying by our Pilots undergoing Blenheim Conversion Course when fit to fly solo. However, they were prevented from getting through by bad weather.

07/11/39

Weather still remains very bad. Pilots lectured on Engine care and maintenance in Station Workshops.

08/11/39

S/Ldr. BUSHELL, F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. MUNRO-HINDS take three Blenheims to Hendon. After leaving two Blenheims there, they proceed to ASTON DOWN in the remaining aircraft. At ASTON DOWN they collect one new Blenheim No. L.2624 and return to Tangmere. During Local Flying later in the day F/Lt. GREEN in this new aircraft, broke the starboard flap control, and will be unserviceable until new rods can be obtained. We succeeded in borrowing some tools from FORD to replace three broken valve springs in another Blenheim engine.

09/11/39

Torrential rain and South-westerly Gale. No flying possible in forenoon, but weather improved later, and local flying practice became possible in afternoon.

10/11/39

The weather continued very poor and it was impossible to fetch any new aircraft from Aston Down or Tern Hill, and only local flying practice was possible.

11/11/39

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12/11/39

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13/11/39

P/O. MUNRO-HINDS did some local Flying practice, but on Landing had difficulty in lowering undercarriage and flaps owing to a leak in the hydraulic system. S/Ldr. BUSHELL. and F/Lt. GREEN went to ASTON DOWN in one BLENHEIM, and picked up the last new one from there. F/Lt. GREEN returned at once, and S/Ldr. BUSHELL landed at FULTON on the return journey to see the Bristol Engine people. They were kind enough to promise to send two engineers with a full set of Mercury tools here for a fortnight to give our men some Mercury experience. On landing at TANGMERE, S/Ldr. BUSHELL discovered all the rods on his Starboard flap broken.

14/11/39

S/Ldr. BUSHELL, F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. MUNRO-HINDS attempted to collect two Blenheims from TERN HILL, but were forced by bad weather to return to TANGMERE. In the afternoon

the weather closed right in and flying became impossible. The two Mercury Experts from Bristol arrived.

15/11/39

S/Ldr. BUSHELL, F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. MUNRO-HINDS flew in one Blenheim to TERN HILL and brought back two new Blenheims. The non-operationally trained officers, did Sector Reconnaissance in 605 Squadron's Tutors. In the evening P/O. MUNRO-HINDS who was flying one of the Blenheims, brought this day from TERN HILL, crashed on the North-East boundary of the aerodrome. Unfortunately, both P/O. MUNRO-HINDS and his two passengers, P/O. DUGDALE and P/O. DRUMMOND, lost their lives. The cause of the accident is at present under review. The aircraft is a total wreck. The weather at the time was, for once, fine and clear.

16/11/39

No flying at all was possible today owing to incessant rain and low cloud. An investigation into the cause of the BLENHEIM accident during the previous day was carried out by the competent authorities.

17/11/39

Again no flying was possible all day due to very bad weather. Considerable work was entailed in making the necessary funeral arrangements for the three Officers killed on the 15th. The two crashed engines of the BLENHEIM were removed to Station Workshops for inspection.

18/11/39

Weather still very bad. Pilot Officer DRUMMOND'S funeral took place at 1100 hours at TANGMERE CHURCH with full ceremonial. No flying was possible in the afternoon owing to heavy rain and low cloud.

19/11/39

Weather improved. Local flying took place all day on Tutors and one Magister. P/O. FRASER returned from HENDON BLENHEIM CONVERSION COURSE. P/O. MAILER reported from No. 3 S.F.T.S. SOUTH CERNEY and went off on one week's leave.

20/11/39

Most of the day was taken up by P/O. MUNRO-HINDS' Funeral at Windsor, which was attended by all the Squadron's officers. This Squadron provided the firing party, and UXBRIDGE the remainder, P/O. BARTLEY returned from Hendon.

21/11/39

A fine day, but not very good visibility. Local flying took place all day and the two HENDON Pilots P/O. FRASER and P/O. BARTLEY flew Blenheims Solo. One Tutor and one Magister were flown. HENDON signalled that they were ready for two more Pilots, and the Commanding Officer attempted to fly P/O. BRYSON and P/O. EDWARDS up to HENDON, but had to turn back owing to fog.

22/11/39

P/O. WILLIAMS reported back from Hendon Blenheim Conversion Course. The weather was very fine, and local flying practice on three Blenheims, one Tutor and one Magister took place all day.

23/11/39

Very wet, and ten-tenths low cloud. A weather test by the Commanding Officer was the only flight.

24/11/39

Slight improvement in weather allowed a considerable amount of local flying practice in the morning, the afternoon being still better.

25/11/39

Reasonable weather lasting most of the day allowed for considerable flying training. F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. FRASER fetched another BLENHEIM from TERN HILL. P/O. BARTLEY took a BLENHEIM to Hendon for the Commanding Officer who had been for thirty-six hours at HORNCHURCH attending a Court Martial.

26/11/39

The Commanding Officer attempted to get through to HENDON, but had to turn back owing to low cloud. A certain amount of local flying practice was possible in the morning, but the weather deteriorated very much later.

27/11/39

No flying possible at all in the morning, but some local flying practice was possible in the afternoon.

28/11/39

Very fine weather. The C.O. went early to TERN HILL with P/O. WILLIAMS to collect another BLENHEIM. He took F/Lt. LITTLE to collect an aircraft from HULLAVINGTON and also collected F/Lt. HUINS from TERN HILL. Flying training took place all day. F/Lt. GREEN took a BLENHEIM to PORTSMOUTH Aerodrome for a demonstration lasting until 29th November, 1939. P/O. WRIGHT, P/O. HILL and P/O. HOLLAND went to HENDON for their Blenheim Conversion Course. 501 Squadron arrived in force.

29/11/39

F/Lt. GREEN returned from Portsmouth. Local flying practice took place all day and the Commanding Officer went to Biggin Hill and returned.

30/11/39

Weather and visibility very poor, but local flying practice possible.

01/12/39

Weather moderate, and considerable Local Flying took place.

02/12/39

The COMMANDING OFFICER, F/Lt. GREEN, P/O. WILLIAMS, P/O. BARTLEY and Sgt. EYLES, flew to TERN HILL in one BLENHEIM and collected three more, weather generally very good.

03/12/39

Local Flying practice took place. Weather fine.

04/12/39

Weather indifferent, but Local Flying practice possible.

05/12/39

Cold, and strong North-West wind. Some Local Flying practice and formation by F/Lt. GREEN, P/O. BARTLEY and P/O. WILLIAMS. Three Pilots P/O. BARTLEY, P/O. WILLIAMS and P/O. FRASER went on Sector Reconnaissance, two accomplished the exercise successfully encountering local storms as was expected. P/O. FRASER lost himself in a local blizzard, and forced landed in a turnip field near WANTAGE, with the undercarriage up. He was unhurt, and the usual damage to his aircraft was sustained, i.e. Two Airscrews, possibly longerons etc., damaged. P/O. FRASER. remained at HARWELL. Sgt. HAIGH, who had been left at TERN HILL on 02/12/39, returned with a new BLENHEIM.

06/12/39

Moderate weather, with cold North-West wind. Considerable Local flying practice took place, but P/O. WILLIAMS failed to reach HARWELL in the morning. Later it was possible and he returned

with P/O. FRASER. At 1400 hours the COMMANDING OFFICER carried out a very successful Test Flight for 0.8. This consisted of flying for thirty-five minutes on a course of 172°, and returning on a reciprocal course at 8,000 feet descending to 1,000 feet off the coast. It is understood that this test proved entirely satisfactory. At 1615 hours Dusk Flying was carried out solo by P/O. WILLIAMS and Sgt. EYLES. Today P/O. EDWARDS returned from the Blenheim Conversion Course at HENDON.

07/12/39

Weather fine and cold. Plenty of Local Flying took place. Dusk Flying was done by P/O. WILLIAMS, P/O. BARTLEY and Sgt. EYLES. This day Sgt. PATTERSON was granted a Commission as PILOT-OFFICER, with effect from 18th November 1939. He was duly informed and initiated.

08/12/39

Torrential rain and no visibility all day made flying quite impossible.

09/12/39

Moderate weather in the morning enabled formation practice with six aircraft to be carried out successfully, but low cloud and rain stopped a further attempt at formation after about twenty minutes, and the Dusk Landing Programme was cancelled.

10/12/39

Very fine day, and considerable Local Flying done. Dusk landings were practised by P/O. FRASER, P/O. BARTLEY and Sgt. EYLES.

11/12/39

Weather good. Formation practice in the morning and individual flying practice. P/O. STRANG arrived on posting. P/O. BARTLEY and Sgt. HAIGH did Dusk Landings. The COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. GREEN each did one hour Night Flying in very dark conditions.

12/12/39

Weather dull but fine. Local Flying practice continued. At 1030 hours P/O. MAILER and P/O. FRASER took off in AVRO TUTOR K. 3309, borrowed from 605 Squadron, for Local Flying practice, and landing practice. At about 1145 hours it was learnt from the Police that a yellow training machine had crashed near SIDLESHAM. This turned out to be the TUTOR K. 3309. The COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. GREEN went at once to the scene of the crash by car, and found the aircraft a total wreck, in a ditch, and both Officers dead. It would appear that their aircraft had been engaged in Low Flying, and on executing a turn near the ground, it had lost height, put its port wing tips into the ground and crashed into a ditch.

13/12/39

Weather bad with low cloud 10/10. The only flying possible was a weather test by F/Lt. GREEN. Visit by the A.O.C.

14/12/39

Weather only moderate in the morning, and local flying was possible. The weather deteriorated in the afternoon, and the Night Flying Programme was cancelled.

15/12/39

Low cloud and rain. Quick starting practice was carried out by available Pilots and Crews. No flying at all possible all day.

16/12/39

Reasonable fine, cold and cloudy. Local Flying practice took place. Night Flying Programme cancelled due to bad visibility.

17/12/39

Cold. Cloudy, but fine. A formation by the COMMANDING OFFICER and the two FLIGHT COMMANDERS done in the morning. Local Flying practice took place in the afternoon but there was no Night Flying.

18/12/39

Cold and dull; visibility poor with clouds at 1400 feet. Throughout the morning F/Lt. BYRNE and F/Lt. GREEN led formation of three aircraft which practised take-off and landings, in the afternoon there was individual flying and the COMMANDING OFFICER with the two FLIGHT COMMANDERS did formation flying for three-quarters or an hour. The dusk landings and Night Flying were cancelled owing to unfavourable weather conditions.

19/12/39

Cold and dull with poor visibility which deteriorated throughout the day. Two weather tests were made, one by the COMMANDING OFFICER, and the other by F/Lt. BYRNE. This was the only flying possible due to the weather conditions. Night Flying was cancelled due to weather.

20/12/39

Again cold and dull, but visibility quite good in forenoon and early afternoon. Deteriorated towards evening and prevented Night Flying. The COMMANDING OFFICER gave dual in the morning, and F/Lt. BYRNE did formation practice with two other aircraft. Formation practice was continued in the afternoon. The COMMANDING OFFICER collected a forced landed Blenheim.

21/12/39

Brilliant sunshine all day long with haze gathering later in the day. F/Lt. BYRNE collected one Blenheim from ASTON DOWN, but had to fly it back most of the way on one engine. General flying practice took place all day and Night Flying took place. Sgt. MACDONALD went solo by day on a Blenheim. F/Lt. GREEN carried out an R.D.F. Exercise under somewhat difficult conditions during the afternoon.

22/12/39

Clear fine frosty weather, with some slight fog. Local Flying practice took place all morning. F/Lt. GREEN did another successful R.D.F test in the afternoon. From 1615 hours until 2359 hours Night Flying, including circuits and landings, and formation

sector reconnaissance was carried out, with a bright moon. The Sector Reconnaissance failed to see the marker searchlight beams, probably due to local fog conditions.

23/12/39

Same fine frosty weather. Local Flying possible all day, but fog conditions prevailing a few miles inland from TANGMERE. Night Flying Programme continued till 2100 hours, when it was abandoned due to increasing fog conditions. This day we were advised of our impending move to Croydon. This news was received without enthusiasm, P/O. WRIGHT returned from Blenheim Conversion Course at Hendon.

24/12/39

Still frosty and fine, but general fog existing a few miles all round TANGMERE. Local Flying practice was possible, but Night Flying had to be abandoned. P/O. HOLLAND this day returned from the Blenheim Conversion Flight at Hendon.

25/12/39

Christmas Day. As this Squadron is not yet Operational today was observed as a holiday. We learnt today that our move to CROYDON is fixed for 29/12/39 by 1600 hrs. In spite of this news a pleasant time was had by all.

26/12/39

P/O. WRIGHT went to CROYDON to investigate billeting and other problems, but had difficulty in finding the necessary people.

Warrant Officer BENNETT also proceeded to CROYDON on the same morning, and on the same mission. Weather fine at first, but deteriorating. Local Flying practice only possible and Night Flying abandoned on instructions of the Station COMMANDER.

27/12/39

Weather fine and local flying practice carried out. Night Flying took place, and Sgt. MCDONALD and P/O. LEARMOND went solo.

28/12/39

The COMMANDING OFFICER flew to CROYDON but had to return by road due to snow. The Advance Party of 92 SQUADRON left at 1000 hours. Snow prevented any further flying, and the day was spent packing up. 601 SQUADRON's Advance Party arrived in the afternoon.

29/12/39

Weather fine, clear and cold. F/Lt. GREEN flew up to CROYDON without landing, to investigate conditions, but reported unfit for our move owing to fog. This was confirmed similarly by the COMMANDING OFFICER later in the morning. Formation practice took place in the afternoon.

TANGMERE AND CROYDON

30/12/39

Clear, cold and fine. Nine Blenheims flew in formation at 1100 hours and arrived in good order at 1145 hours. Visibility only

moderate. Main Party left at 0900 hours by road, and arrived 1230 hours.

CROYDON

31/12/39

Visibility poor. Only a Flight test by F/Lt. GREEN possible. Squadron attended Church Parade. ADJUTANT, in charge of Rear Party reported. This Squadron has carried out 280.30 hours flying by Day and 36.30 hrs Night Flying during the month of December, with an average of 6 aircraft.

01/01/40

Thick fog and no flying in the morning. Weather cleared a bit at 1500 hours and a little flying was possible after a weather test by F/Lt. BYRNE, but a Night Flying programme had to be cancelled due to weather. The COMMANDING OFFICER was confirmed in rank this day.

02/01/40

Beautiful day , and lots of flying including formation practice. The COMMANDING OFFICER took F/Lt. GREEN to NORHOLT for his AIR FIGHTING COURSE. P/O. BRYSON got lost on SECTOR (?) RECONNAISSANCE and forced landed at HARWELL and had to stay the night as weather had thickened. A fine night and Night Flying began at about 1900 hours and continued till after midnight.

03/01/40

A fine cold day with fair visibility. P/O. BRYSON returned from HARWELL. Considerable local and Sector flying took place. P/O. LEARMOND flew to TANGMERE and back. Night Flying continued until about 2100 hours.

04/01/40

Weather not so cold, but 10/10 cloud about 1000 feet. An exercise for Guns and interception by HURRICANES over the SECTOR took place. The COMMANDING OFFICER did an exercise for BENTLEY PRIORY DEFENCES, but was somewhat hampered by thick weather. The Night Flying programme was abandoned owing to thick weather.

05/01/40

A low shallow belt of fog over CROYDON prevented flying until noon. Four BLENHEIMS left at 1230 for a Gun and interception exercise round the SECTOR. When they returned over CROYDON at about 1400 hours visibility was too bad for landing, and they were instructed by R/T to proceed to TANGMERE, where they landed at about 1530. No Night Flying was possible.

06/01/40

Thick fog in the morning which only improved slightly during the day made all flying impossible, and the four BLENHEIMS were forced to remain at TANGMERE. The remaining pilots made use of the LINK TRAINER at KENLEY.

07/01/40

Visibility poor and some rain. There was no flying. The five pilots who forced landed at TANGMERE returned by train.

08/01/40

Weather extremely bad - fog and low cloud. After lunch it cleared slightly and F/Lt. BYRNE with four pilots flew to TANGMERE to bring back the four BLENHEIMS which forced landed there last Friday, only two of them got back, so that there are three pilots at TANGMERE. The COMMANDING OFFICER set off for ASTON DOWN but bad weather forced him to return after reaching NEWBURY.

09/01/40

In spite of the weather the three pilots still at TANGMERE managed to return to Croydon at 1230 hours. Only a little local flying practice was possible at CROYDON and no Night Flying took place.

10/01/40

A good deal of local flying took place in nice weather. The COMMANDING OFFICER and P/O. BARTLEY collected one BLENHEIM from ASTON DOWN. P/O. HOLLAND went solo at night. Night flying finished at 2030 owing to thickening weather. The COMMANDING OFFICER went off on seven days leave.

11/01/40

Cold, fine and sunny. F/Lt. BYRNE gave dual to a pilot from 248 Squadron. Only a limited amount of flying was possible as there were few machines serviceable. Night flying was held up until 2100 hours due to there being some drifting balloons about, after this it was continued until 0330 hours, but one BLENHEIM flown by Sgt. HAIGH was damaged on landing.

12/01/40

F/Lt. Green returned from AIR FIRING DEVELOPMENT course. The damaged BLENHEIM was brought into 92 Squadron Hangar. Only one SECTOR RECONNAISSANCE was possible as only one aircraft was serviceable

13/01/40

Weather bad and no flying possible at all.

14/01/40

Thick fog, and no flying possible

15/01/40

Weather improved slightly and F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. EDWARDS did A.A. exercise. They were not however able to return to CROYDON as the weather thickened and landed at TANGMERE. No Night Flying was possible owing to ground mist.

16/01/40

A fine cold morning. P/O. EDWARDS returned from TANGMERE. A.A. exercise took place with three aircraft at 1100 hours also local flying practice and dual for P/O. ARTHUR of 248 Squadron. With five aircraft in the air a bad and sudden snowstorm came on at 1530 hours and P/O. WRIGHT was forced to land at GATWICK and P/O. BRYSON at TANGMERE. During the day F/Lt. Green flew from TANGMERE to St. NEVYN CORNWALL to fetch the COMMANDING OFFICER.

17/01/40

Fine but visibility poor. No flying possible, although P/O. BRYSON managed to get in from TANGMERE. P/O. ARTHUR rejoins 248 Squadron HENDON. Visibility improved a little in the afternoon and local flying took place. The COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. Green managed to fly from St. EVAL to TANGMERE. No Night Flying was practical.

18/01/40

The A.A. exercise was duly carried out i/c P/O. LEARMOND. The COMMANDING OFFICER was flown up by 601 SQUADRON from TANGMERE , as the BLENHEIM of 92 SQUADRON was not running properly on one engine. Later in the day F/Lt. GREEN brought it up. Local flying in the afternoon. S/Ldr. ROBERTS from H.Q.F.C. visited the Squadron. A Night Flying programme was attempted at 2130 hours but after a test flight by F/Lt. BYRNE discovered snowy conditions it was abandoned.

19/01/40

A very fine day and warmer. The A.A. exercise was duly carried out, and F/Lt. BYRNE visited GATWICK to inspect the result of the burst water pipes, and find out the position generally. Local flying took place in the afternoon. An extensive Night Flying programme was carried out between 2130 hours and 0330 hours in very fine weather.

20/01/40

The A.A. exercise was carried out and local flying was possible all day. The Night Flying programme however had to be abandoned owing to local fog.

21/01/40

Visibility poor, but local flying possible. The COMMANDING OFFICER attempted to go to GATWICK, but had to turn back on account of bad visibility. A snowstorm in the afternoon prevented further flying.

22/01/40

Warmer and clear. Local flying and dual given to Sgt. FOKES also later went solo. Snow and clouds prevented flying after 1530 hours. P/O. WHITMARSH who has been reposted to 92 Squadron after illness, reported for duty. The C.O. Officer Airmen Pilots and Senior N.C.O.'s attended the GRAND THEATRE CROYDON at the invitation of MR. TEDDY JOYCE.

23/01/40

No flying was possible in the morning due to fog, which cleared a bit after mid-day. The COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. BYRNE flew to GATWICK and F/Lt. GREEN took a formation round the SECTOR while other Pilots did local circuits and landings. Night Flying finished at 2330.

24/01/40

Weather warmer and visibility fair. A.A. exercises carried out. F/Lt. BYRNE took three aircraft and P/O's WRIGHT, HILL and WHITMARSH and Sgt. FOKES to GATWICK to establish an advanced training base. P/O. WILLIAMS while doing a SECTOR RECONNAISSANCE had his port engine airscrew and reduction gear fly off over BRIGHTON at about 1500 feet. P/O. WILLIAMS promptly headed for GATWICK and forced landed there very successfully on the remaining engine. He was later collected by the COMMANDING OFFICER. A Night Flying programme with one aircraft finished at 2230.

CROYDON AND GATWICK

25/01/40

Fine weather. Local flying with two serviceable machines. The COMMANDING OFFICER visited GATWICK. A Night Flying programme included an exercise done by the COMMANDING OFFICER at TANGMERE in which TANGMERE was raided successfully. Local flying and SECTOR RECONNAISSANCE continues with three aircraft. P/O. BARTLEY mistook ASCOT

CONCENTRATION CAMP lights for LINGFIELD and BENSON for CROYDON, and landed there, and spent the night.

26/01/40

P/O. BARTLEY returned early from BENSON. The weather was poor but in the morning and early afternoon several pilots flew for half an hour each to keep their hand in for Night Flying. In the evening there was rain which later turned to snow and the Night Flying was cancelled in consequence.

27/01/40

There was no flying today because the aerodrome was wet with the thaw. F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. BARTLEY travelled independently by road to GATWICK where needless to say there was no more activity than here. P/O. WRIGHT returned from GATWICK. In the evening it froze again and during the night about 4 inches of snow fell.

28/01/40

Clouds at 700 feet, visibility very poor. P/O. LEARMOND carried out a weather test but weather conditions were unfavourable and no more flying took place throughout the day. In the afternoon a party of Officers tobogganed on BOX HILL regardless of the fact that there was no snow there.

29/01/40

Still more snow overnight. The day is chiefly noteworthy for the many and frenzied efforts made to clear the snow from the

TARMAC in front of the hangar. P/O. BRYSON was in charge of operations and was lucky enough to secure the valuable services of the army.

30/01/40

Snow clearing with two snow ploughs continued, and considerable progress made in front of the hangar, and on the runway. Only a little more snow fell during the day.

31/01/40

Snow still lying but thawing. Foggy. No flying possible, but snow clearing on runway proceeded with over 100 men at work.

CROYDON

01/02/40

Foggy and thawing. Aerodrome surface very soft. No flying at all possible.

02/02/40

The same weather and no flying.

03/02/40

The same, and a lot of snow now gone.

04/02/40

Snow practically all gone, but foggy and no flying possible.

05/02/40

Snow all gone, but aerodrome surface very wet and weather thick. No flying.

06/02/40

Warmer and S. Westerly wind. Very low cloud 6/10. P/O. BARTLEY did a weather test which recorded a very low cloud, and no further flying was considered advisable. Link Trainer practice was continued at KENLEY.

07/02/40

Rain and low cloud. Visit paid to the Station by the A.O.C. and Air Vice Marshal WELCH. P/O. R. SCOTT posted as air gunner to this Squadron. Still no flying.

08/02/40

No Flying possible. Wet and foggy. The aerodrome has dried well, and is quite serviceable but no flying possible.

09/02/40

Colder and very thick weather. No flying possible. The ADJUTANT visited GATWICK to interview the G.P.O. BRIGHTON area telephone representative, with F/Lt. BYRNE.

10/02/40

Fine, cold and clear. General immediate aerial activity. The COMMANDING OFFICER and GROUP CAPTAIN MOORE met at GATWICK. P/O. BARTLEY fetched the MAGISTER recently allotted

from 111 Squadron NORTHOLT. P/O. EDWARDS AND P/O. BRYSON fetched L. 1257 from BRISTOL. The rest of the Pilots operated from GATWICK during the day and returned later in the afternoon. P/O. LEARMOND took F/Lt. J. LITTLE to MANSTON and back. No. 145 squadron brought off a very curious and lucky mid-air collision between two aircraft. A Night Flying programme was carried out from 1930 - 2345 hours in a clear but dark night. Total flying time of the squadron for the day was approximately 40 hours.

11/02/40

A fine day to start with. F/Lt. GREEN led a formation of 3 aircraft on a Sector Reconnaissance, but the weather got thick and they were brought down at KENLEY by the CONTROLLER with a Hurricane. Later they proceeded to GATWICK. Flying became impossible after mid-day, and the Night Flying programme was cancelled.

12/02/40

Weather cold, and visibility only moderate. Considerable local flying activity at CROYDON and GATWICK. The COMMANDING OFFICER and P/O. HILL went to TANGMERE to collect BLENHEIM L.1236 but P/O. HILL failed to return, owing to a misunderstanding. The COMMANDING OFFICER brought back L. 1236. The Night Flying programme was abandoned owing to the probability of snow in the weather report.

13/02/40

Snow had fallen during the night, but P/O. HILL managed to return early from TANGMERE. A little local flying was possible at CROYDON and GATWICK, but there was a good deal of snow cloud about, which prevented Night Flying.

14/02/40

Cold and clearer. Local flying and A.A. exercise carried out. Visibility deteriorated and not much afternoon flying and no Night Flying was possible.

15/02/40

Cold and 10/10 cloud, but 3 aircraft proceeded to GATWICK, and two aircraft did A.A. exercise. A good deal of flying between GATWICK and CROYDON and vice versa took place, but the weather made Night Flying impracticable.

16/02/40

Cold and fairly foggy weather, cloud 10/10 at 2,000 ft. but considerable aerial activity took place during the day and night. Serviceable aircraft which were so plentiful at the beginning of the month are fast becoming a rare luxury. L. 1361 has a cracked stern frame and there is nothing right with L. 1236. All Pilots at GATWICK have gone solo. Night Flying with 3 machines was carried out between 1730 and 2200 hours in spite of an adverse weather report and gale warning. The last Pilot landed ½ hour before a young blizzard descended on the aerodrome. The total

flying hours during the day were 18 hrs. 15 minutes, and during the night 10 hours.

17/02/40

Snow had fallen during the night, but some local flying was possible. No Night flying.

18/02/40

Weather only moderate, but local flying and sector reconnaissance were carried out. No exercises and no Night Flying were done.

19/02/40

No flying was possible at all, due to foggy conditions following the thaw.

20/02/40

Low cloud 10/10 and bad visibility. A weather test by the C.O. but no further flying advisable. Another weather test by the COMMANDING OFFICER at 1630 hours, caused him to cancel Night Flying.

21/02/40

Weather and visibility still only moderate, but a restricted amount of local flying was possible. The Night Flying programme was first postponed, and finally cancelled. The main GATWICK party returned by road, leaving one aircraft and a small maintenance party.

22/02/40

Weather slightly improved. Sgt. FOKES carried out an R.D.F. Exercise satisfactorily. General local flying and F/Lt. BYRNE returned from GATWICK. F/O. J. GILLIES who had been to us for BLENHEIM conversion returned to 604 Squadron at NORTHOLT, after completing his conversion. 145 Squadron have a BLENHEIM lose one cylinder and all one engine cowling, and force landed wheels up successfully in a small field to the S.W. of the Aerodrome. Night flying was carried out in a bright moonlight but under somewhat misty conditions until 0100 hours. The R/T. course returned from UXBRIDGE.

23/02/40

Weather rather poor, but local flying possible at times. F/Lt. GREEN and crew left on Special Mission to St. ATHAN at 1440 and arrived 1545 in spite of low cloud. S/Ldr. BUSHELL and crew left at 1530 and had to put down at CARDIFF due to thick weather conditions. No Night flying was possible.

24/02/40

A fine clear day. P/O. GOUT left for LECONFIELD with BLENHEIM L.1330 which has been awaiting disposal. Considerable flying activity took place all day and a large number of flying hours were recorded on this the first fine day for weeks. A Night Flying programme was started at dusk. The weather was clear beneath high cloud nearly 10/10. At night 1900 P/O. WHITMARSH who had just completed about one hour's night dual took off on his first

night solo, for some reason - not yet determined - he crashed from a low altitude into houses on the West boundary of the Aerodrome. The machine disintegrated, exploded and burst into flames. P/O. WHITMARSH was thrown clear and killed instantly. Damage by fire and impact was done to 5 dwelling houses, 3 cars and garages. Two civilians died in hospital a third is seriously injured and 8 more have shock. P/O. WHITMARSH was the sole occupant of the aircraft BLENHEIM L.6724. Night flying ceased.

25/02/40

Fine but cloudy local flying took place all day and Sgt. MACDONALD went to TANGMERE and back. Night flying was possible only up to 2000 hours when fog came on.

26/02/40

Local flying practice took place in warm but not very fine weather.

27/02/40

Low cloud made much flying impractical. The COMMANDING OFFICER weather bound at CATTERICK. No Night Flying possible. The inquest on P/O. WHITMARSH and the two civilians took place.

28/02/40

Local flying took place. The Court of inquiry into the accident to BLENHEIM aircraft L. 6724 began. The COMMANDING OFFICER returned from CATTERICK by train owing to thick weather.

29/02/40

Rough but fine weather and general local flying took place.

CROYDON

01/03/40

A fine day and strong easterly wind, a lot of flying was put in. A day exercise for A.A. co-operation was carried out at Newhaven. No Night Flying.

02/03/40

A very fine day. As much local and sector flying as was possible with our limited aircraft was carried out. F/Lt. GREEN and P/O. BARTLEY completed their special duty by arriving from Catterick.

03/03/40

Very fine day but misty near the ground. Flying was however possible, and local formation practice etc. was carried out. P/O. LEARMOND took a navigator Officer back to CAREW CHERITON.

04/03/40

Very fine and cold wind, but very poor visibility prevented flying before 1100 hrs, after which as much flying was done as aircraft permitted. A searchlight exercise arranged for 2000 hours had to be cancelled, as ground mist came on after sunset.

05/03/40

Station Parade practice, fine, cold and clear. As much local flying was carried out as serviceable aircraft permitted. F/Lt. BYRNE took some pilots to NORTHOLT to examine a Spitfire, as this day our Allotment for 21 Spitfires was received. 8 from No.9 Maintenance Unit COSFORD and 13 from No.27 Maintenance Unit SHAWBURY and One Master aircraft was also allotted us this day from READING.

06/03/40

Station Parade Cold N.W. wind fairly fine. P/O. BARTLEY and F/Lt. GREEN went to READING (PHILLIPS and POWIS) to fetch newly allotted Master aircraft L.7534. The Commanding Officer took F/Lt. BOYD (145) and SQUADRON LEADER GIFFORD 3 SQUADRON to collect Spitfires. F/Lt. BYRNE collected 3 pilots from NORTHOLT also to collect Spitfires from COSFORD. The COMMANDING OFFICER returned with two formations of 7 Spitfires in all, but the eighth aircraft was not yet serviceable.

07/03/40

Very poor visibility and A. A. Exercise had to be cancelled. Very little flying was possible until the evening, when the COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. GREEN took the Master up.

08/03/40

Fine but poor visibility the Master was flown and a lecture on Spitfire flying given by F/Lt. BOYD of 145 SQUADRON. Mr. ROSE of VICKERS SUPERMARINE visited the SQUADRON and also F/Lt.

HEALEY from 11 GROUP. P/O. BRYSON took P/O. HOLLAND to OLD SARUM and returned alone. In the afternoon the weather and visibility improved and F/Lt. GREEN, P/O. LEARMOND, Sgt. FOKES, and P/O. BLOMLEY went solo on Spitfires.

09/03/40

Very fine and clear, general activity with Spitfires continued. P/O. EDWARDS went solo Sgt. EYLES went on his nose taxiing a Blenheim on a bad patch on the aerodrome P/O. BARTLEY and P/O. EDWARDS went solo on Spitfires. Flying continued until dusk.

10/03/40

Very fine weather and a lot of Spitfire and Master flying was carried out also Spitfire formations.

11/03/40

Still fine weather, considerable flying time was put in on Spitfires. P/O. BRYSON took F/Sgt. PAYNE to fetch the 8th Spitfire from COSFORD. Orders received from KENLEY that no further flying is to be done on Blenheims.

12/03/40

A fine morning which deteriorated into low cloud and rain from mid-day and prevented flying after that time.

13/03/40

Moderately fine and 7/10 to 10/10 cloud. Some formation practice with and without R/T. P/O. EDWARDS got lost and forced landed at

ROCHESTER but returned later. Low cloud and late rain stopped flying in the afternoon.

14/03/40

Snow and sleet which continued until mid-afternoon. No flying was possible, but a party of pilots spent the afternoon at the link trainer.

15/03/40

Fine and clear, a lot of aviation including Spitfire formation and Master dual. The COMMANDING OFFICER took F/Lt. ATKIN to TANGMERE in the Master. Fighter Attacks were practised in formation with a Blenheim as target.

16/03/40

Thick mist. Link trainer used in the morning. Weather cleared at mid-day and flying became possible after lunch, including a formation of 5 Spitfires. S/Ldr H.A. PURVIS paid us a visit while collecting a Wellington.

17/03/40

Rain and low cloud, no flying possible, link trainer used at KENLEY.

18/03/40

Rain and low cloud which cleared about 1100 hours. Formation practice and general flying practice took place and it was continued until dusk. F/O. CASANOVE reported on posting.

19/03/40

Wind very strong broken clouds at 2000 feet. There was flying until approximately 1200 hours when an aircraft P.9371 which F/Lt. GREEN had landed in formation tipped up on its nose while stationary on the aerodrome. It was then decided that the wind was too gusty so that all flying ceased. Towards midnight there was an air raid "Flap" and all the aircraft had to be dispersed on the aerodrome. In the darkness and confusion 2 Spitfires were pushed into each other with resulting damage to both wing tips.

20/03/40

Fine with strong S.W. wind. Three machines loaded with pilots left for SHAWBURY to collect Spitfires. In all, nine were collected. Before their return orders came from Headquarters Fighter Command for 92 Squadron to disperse all available aircraft to GATWICK and disperse them there. Order received at 1700 hours before Spitfires had returned but by 1915 hours 14 Spitfires, 2 Blenheims, and 1 Magister were dispersed at GATWICK. About 50 Airmen were transported by road. The ADJUTANT and two Officers were left at CROYDON.

CROYDON AND GATWICK.

21/03/40

Weather report uncertain and cloud 10/10 at 1000 feet. In the afternoon F/Lt. GREEN brought Sgt. KLIPSCH and a Blenheim and later the COMMANDING OFFICER, P/O. EDWARDS and P/O. WILLIAMS arrived in Spitfires and returned to GATWICK after the

guns on two aircraft had been aligned. P/O. BLOMELEY left 92 Squadron on posting to 25 Squadron.

22/03/04

Five Spitfires and one Blenheim came up from GATWICK first thing in the morning. The COMMANDING OFFICER gave dual in the Master to P/O. HARGREAVES. F/O. CASANOVE flew the Magister to GATWICK. P/O. HILL who has been ill with pleurisy for two weeks developed pneumonia and was taken to hospital. P/O. EDWARDS brought a Spitfire from GATWICK to have the guns aligned. The COMMANDING OFFICER gave dual in the Master to Sgt. KLIPSCH. At 1900 hours all Spitfires returned to GATWICK.

23/03/40

Low cloud at first. The COMMANDING OFFICER arrived at CROYDON in a Spitfire and gave dual in the Master to F/O. CASANOVE. The COMMANDING OFFICER took the Master to GATWICK. F/O. CASANOVE went solo on Spitfires. At GATWICK general flying was carried out from 1100 hours to 1600 hours including formation and practice attacks on a Blenheim target. P/O. BRYSON visited the Squadron in a 604 Squadron Blenheim.

24/03/40

Early morning mist, clearing later, but leaving much low cloud until late in the Afternoon. Flying continued from 1130 hours until 1915 hours. Formation flying and practice attacks on a Blenheim being the main exercises carried out. The COMMANDING

OFFICER returned from PHILIPS and POWIS, READING in the Master.

25/03/40

A good deal of flying today until 1800 hours when rain stopped flying. Formation flying, quick take offs, and practice interceptions of the Blenheim were carried out. During an interception exercise F/Lt. BYRNE's engine was observed to be pouring out black smoke and oil, and he prepared to force land on a race course near EDENBRIDGE, KENT. Unfortunately at the last minute the unexpected appearance of horses and riders in the field he had selected, caused him to make a quick 90 degrees turn into a small field alongside, the result being that the Spitfire was written off. F/Lt. BYRNE escaped with a bruised head and a little concussion. A leaking oil pipe is suspected, or the absence of the requisite amount of engine. Several pilots went to BIGGIN HILL after their guns had been aligned and shot into butts.

26/03/40

Pouring rain continued all day, GATWICK AERODROME became very waterlogged.

27/03/40

A little flying was possible during the morning. It was decided not to fly during the afternoon owing to the proximity of GATWICK RACE MEETING which was in progress. During the afternoon P/O. WRIGHT and F/O. GILLIES delivered two Blenheims one to TERN HILL and one to ASTON DOWN. F/O. GILLIES returning by train.

In the evening the Squadron returned from GATWICK to CROYDON in a formation of 11 Spitfires. The main party returned by road.

CROYDON

28/03/40

Fine but a strong N.W. Wind. Flying was possible only with great care taxing. Interception exercise carried out morning and afternoon. Attempt to fetch 4 remaining Spitfires frustrated by only remaining serviceable Blenheim going U/S.

29/03/40

A fine day, a fair amount of flying was done. One interception exercise was carried out.

30/03/40

Interception exercise carried out, two battle climbs to 27,000 ft. Four more Spitfires were collected from SHAWBURY.

31/03/40

A New Flying Programme was started. Pilots divided into five sections, one section at Readiness, three available and one released. Interception exercises carried out and attacks on target Aircraft. An A.A. Co-op exercise was also done. Sgt. HAVERCROFT taxied Spitfire with Airman on tail behind two Spitfires running petrol out, Airman jumped off tail and went to wing tip, owing to

slipstream of two Spitfires, Sgt. HAVERCROFT'S machine tipped up on its nose, badly damaged airscrew.

CROYDON.

01/04/40

A fine day, very strong S.W. wind, but a great deal of flying was done. P/O. HARGREAVES took BLENHEIM L.6126 to ASTON DOWN on Allotment and returned by train.

02/04/40

Fairly strong S.W. wind with occasional showers, but a good deal of flying time was put in and some more aircraft guns were fired on the butts at BIGGIN HILL.

03/04/40

G/CAPT. MOORE'S parade. Low cloud and rain caused an interception practice to be abandoned. The weather improved later in the day, and flying continued until dusk, concluding with 3 Flights going up to recognise 6 types of friendly Bomber in the BIGGIN HILL area.

04/04/40

Strong westerly wind and rather low cloud, but plenty of flying practice took place including practice dives on a target on the aerodrome, pilots being instructed to pull out well above 500 feet. In the evening 3 Flights of SPITFIRES went again to inspect the 6

types of friendly Bomber, which exercise was successfully carried out.

05/04/40

Strong northerly wind, but flying practice was carried out throughout the day.

06/04/40

Air to Ground firing at DENGIE FLAT range. The first detail left CROYDON at 0630 and 14 Pilots had three runs each in spite of bad visibility on most of the flight there and back. The exercise was carried out successfully and only 3 gun stoppages occurred. The Squadron was given the greater part of the afternoon free.

07/04/40

Squadron Church Parade. Weather very fine and clear, but clouded up after mid-day. The usual Interception practices, formation and battle climbs took place.

08/04/40

Air to Ground firing at DENGIE FLAT range started at 0700, but had to be abandoned owing to visibility and rain at 0900 hours. The COMMANDING OFFICER was obliged to land at NORTH WEALD. The weather deteriorated further during the day, and all flying had to be stopped during the afternoon.

09/04/40

A Station Parade was held at 1015 hours to enable the A.O.C. - who arrived by air - to address 145 Squadron and congratulate A.C. HAYES on the subject of his gallantry on the occasion of two BLENHEIMS being in collision in mid-air on February 10. After this flying practice took place in moderate weather. Wing Cmdr. BROADHURST visited this Station.

10/04/40

Very strong Northerly wind, but usual flying practice carried on.

11/04/40

Fine and clear. Practice interceptions, Fighter Command attacks etc. carried out.

12/04/40

Low cloud and some rain made flying impossible before noon. After that, the usual flying practices were carried out.

13/04/40

Fine weather, permitting intensified flying training programme.

14/04/40

Fine, with N.W. wind. Normal flying training proceeded all day. The COMMANDING OFFICER left for MANSTON in the MAGISTER at 1800 hours. P/O. BRYSON went on his nose in a SPITFIRE, probably due to too slow a landing speed and over

application of the brakes. The resultant damage was one airscrew tip and a cracked stern frame.

15/04/40

Fine, but windy from West, with increasing force, until at 1500 hours rain squalls and high wind stopped flying until 1730 hours.

16/04/40

Very fine and clear, with fresh westerly breeze, but weather deteriorated during the day and somewhat reduced flying practice.

17/04/40

Very fine and less wind. Normal flying training carried out in the morning. From 1230 hours Air to Ground firing at DENGIE FLATS took place, under good conditions. 64 SQUADRON collected one SPITFIRE of 92 Squadron's allotted to them. The C.O. fetched a new tail wheel tube from PHILIPS & POWIS, READING.

18/04/40

Overcast, but fairly clear. A visit paid to the Squadron by the GROUP CAPTAIN, who watched flying for a time, and inspected the Squadron Hangars etc. Flying practice Proceeded normally.

19/04/40

Fine, but a strong North Westerly wind. Interceptions, battle climbs, Fighter Attacks were carried out. S/Ldr. BUTTAIN from FIGHTER COMMAND paid a visit to the SQUADRON. W/Cmdr. BROADHURST and W/Cmdr. ATCHERLEY also came to see us and

G/CAPT. MOORE said goodbye before leaving KENLEY and the GROUP.

20/04/40

Weather cloudy but fine - general flying took place - interceptions, Battle climbs etc. "Blinkers" were fitted to some aircraft in preparation for Night Flying which took place from 2045 to 0330 hours. There was a bright moon. The C.O.'s and Blue Section carried out landings and Sector reconnaissance successfully. Total Night Flying hours 1245.

21/04/40

Fine weather, and the usual flying training was carried out. At night, which was clear, Night Flying took place including a formation battle climb.

22/04/40

Fine weather and normal flying training practice took place. Some dusk landings were done but a lot of cloud and obscured moon made Night Flying for SPITFIRES inadvisable and later on the practice of E/A. on the KENLEY Operations board kept our aircraft grounded. However, the C.O. did a complete Sector Reconnaissance at 2145 hours with S/Ldr. NORMAN and F/Lt. WALLACE to observe lighting conditions in the SECTOR.

23/04/40

Fine, but overcast. Normal flying routine proceeded. Two new Pilots P/O. R.MOTTRAM and P/O. C.H. SAUNDERS who had

reported from KINLOSS F.T.S. on 20/4/40 were given dual in the MASTER by Sgt. FOKES and the C.O. and later went off successfully in SPITFIRES. No Night Flying was attempted.

24/04/40

Low cloud and rain, which persisted all day, and prevented any flying by day or night.

25/04/40

Fine all day and the usual amount of flying training practices took place. Most officers of the Squadron attended a cocktail party at KENLEY, which was a great success.

26/04/40

Normal flying took place until mid-day, but in anticipation of a Night Flying programme, flying stopped after mid-day. However, the weather deteriorated and dusk landings were cancelled. It was hoped that at 0200 hours the rising moon would enable flying to start, but 10/10 cloud made it impossible although Pilots passed the night in the Crew Room. During the day P/O. BARTLEY took Mr. GEKE civilian CROYDON ENGINEER, on a tour of camouflage inspection in a BLENHEIM, including GATWICK and LYMPNE.

27/04/40

Fairly fine weather, but bad visibility at first. Later general flying practice was possible. P/O. MOTTRAM who had taken off at 1430 in a SPITFIRE aircraft noticed that his Starboard wheel would not come up, nor would his Port wheel go down. After getting into R/T,

touch with RUNICK, and through them with the C.O. who made various suggestions to P/O. MOTTRAM and after considerable time had elapsed it was found possible to retract the starboard wheel, and hold it up by constant pumping. At 1700 hours with the Starboard wheel down about 45° P/O. MOTTRAM made a perfect "Ventre-a-terre" landing before a large and enthusiastic audience doing the minimum amount of damage under the circumstances and with only 10 gallons of petrol left.

28/04/40

Rain and 10/10 cloud, the latter persisting all day and making flying impossible.

29/04/40

Still thick low cloud, which lifted about 1500 hours and enabled flying to proceed. At 1800 hours a Squadron formation of 12 aircraft did 1½ hours flying including flying over TANGMERE, BIGGIN HILL and KENLEY. In the evening W/Cmdr. GRICE complimented the squadron by telephone on the quality of their formation.

30/04/40

Low cloud and mist, which persisted all day and made flying impossible. The time was well spent in Maintenance work, writing up log books and tidying up generally.

CROYDON

01/05/40

Poor visibility persisted all day, preventing flying until about 1630 hours when 3 aircraft practised formation. The expected visit of the A.O.C. did not materialise.

02/05/40

Thick weather, making flying impracticable until evening, when some given on the MASTER to Pilots of another Squadron.

03/05/40

Fine, but poor visibility. Normal flying practice took place. W/Commander HATCHER visited the Squadron and flew a Spitfire for an R/T. test. The COMMANDING OFFICER and P/O. BARTLEY took the BLENHEIM to EASTLEIGH to collect the Spitfire from there, and Spitfires from this Squadron did Camera Gun practice on the BLENHEIM, on the outward and return journey.

04/05/40

Fine, but bad visibility which improved later in the afternoon, when formation practice took place and dual was given in the MASTER to Pilots of 145 Squadron. The Signal was this day received that 92 Squadron will move to NORTHOLT on 9/5/40. F/Lt. V. BYRNE posted to 74 Squadron. His Flight is taken over by F/O. TUCK who reported from 65 Squadron on 1/5/40.

05/05/40

Squadron Church Parade. Very fine weather, and flying practice started immediately after Church Parade and continued all day.

06/05/40

Wet and foggy all day. No flying.

07/05/40

Weather improved. Slight mist in the morning. Flying most of the day. The C.O. went to LYMPNE to carry out gunnery practice with Spitfires in the afternoon.

08/05/40

Advance Party left for NORTHOLT in the morning. P/O. BRINTON and P/O. M^c. GOWAN reported to NORTHOLT and took over Squadron Offices etc. F/O. BRINTON returned to CROYDON in the evening.

NORTHOLT

09/05/40

Very fine weather all day. First seven Spitfires arrived about noon, F/O. TUCK in command from CROYDON. Station C.O. on TARMAC to receive them. On their arrival they at once commenced operational duties, one Section at Readiness - one Available. The Pilots then took their machine to the dispersal stations. The remainder of the Squadron - nine Spitfires - arrived with the C.O.

at about 1500 hours. H.Q. 11 Group notified that move was completed at 1700 hours.

10/05/40

Another very fine day. As the Squadron is now Operational, six Spitfires are kept at the different dispersal points in readiness. At about 1500 hours a practice operational movement was made and after the firing of a white rocket, three of the Readiness Section went up. Owing to the progress of the War today everyone was recalled from leave and all leave has been stopped.

11/05/40

Weather again very good. Usual operational duties carried out at the dispersal points, F/O. GILLIES returned from leave.

12/05/40

Slightly colder but the weather remains very fine. P/O. HILL who returned from sick leave recently did his first Spitfire solo today. At about noon today a warning came through and nine Spitfires were put at Readiness till the All Clear was given.

13/05/40

The weather remains very good. Usual operational duties were carried out today. This afternoon a practice was carried out with 604 and proved very satisfactory. Night flying will take place at dusk tonight.

14/05/50

During the day the usual operational duties were carried out, both 'A' and 'B' Flights now being available and at readiness from 0830 till 1700. P/O. LINDSAY reports for training from TANGMERE. Sgt. Pilot RAMSAY reported for duty having been posted to 92 Squadron. The weather remains bright and clear. Night Flying took place at dusk. With much regret we said goodbye to F/O. BRINTON, the late Adjutant who is returning to civil life.

15/05/40

The weather is still very good. A slight thunderstorm with rain occurred during the night. W/Cmdr. HAMILTON arrived to inspect the MASTER this morning and then took off for PRESTWICK with Sgt. RAMSEY who returns to 92 SQDN tomorrow. F/O. TUCK and P/O. WRIGHT are detailed to escort an ENSIGN to FRANCE this afternoon with SPITFIRES. NIGHT FLYING had been arranged for tonight, but it had to be cancelled owing to rain which commenced at dusk. The ESCORT FLIGHT to FRANCE was also cancelled this afternoon. P/O. LINDSAY who reported for training from TANGMERE yesterday, returned to TANGMERE today as the MASTER is at present unserviceable.

16/05/40

Much rain fell in the night and this morning is dull. No flying is taking place owing to bad visibility. Flying commenced about noon. At 1400 hours THREE SPITFIRES did firing practice with a BLENHEIM flown by F/O. BARRY-SMTH who is attached to

STATION temporarily with a BEAUFORT BOMBER. THREE SPITFIRES left for FRANCE this afternoon to escort a FLAMINGO, under the command of F/O. TUCK. Night Flying took place. The night was clear with a three-quarter moon.

17/05/40

A very good day again for flying. THE SECTION under F/O. TUCK which went to PARIS yesterday, returned to NORTHOLT at 1000 hours after having landed at HENDON. They had an uneventful trip and had stayed at the Air Port Hotel at LE BOURGET. Another practice Flight was made in the afternoon with the BEAUFORT, using cine-cameras. Much valuable information has been obtained as regards arming of BEAUFORTS against hostile fighters. The night was clear with a bright moon and Night Flying was in operation as usual. A slight ground mist made ground visibility bad. AIR COMMODORE PROBYN arrived in the evening and did some Night Flying in a SPITFIRE.

18/05/40

The weather remains perfect again today. AIR TO GROUND FIRING PRACTICE took place at DENGIE FLATS this morning. A warning was given out about 1030 hours and all machines were called in. TWO SECTIONS remained at READINESS all night, and Night Flying which was in operation was stopped at about 2300 hours. The night was clear with almost a full moon.

19/05/40

Beautiful summer weather continued today. An escort of THREE SPITFIRES left for PARIS at about 0800 hours this morning, under the command of F/Lt. GREEN, the other two Pilots were P/O. BARTLEY, and Sgt. FOKES. They returned about noon without having had anything out of the usual happen. The COMMANDING OFFICER with THREE SPITFIRES took off this afternoon for another escort flight to PARIS. They landed at HENDON but were not required for the escort. They stayed the night at HENDON. Night Flying took place in a clear moon light night.

20/05/40

SQUADRON LEADER BUSHELL and the THREE SPITFIRES arrived back from HENDON this morning. The weather is again clear and bright. The COMMANDING OFFICER went to FARNBOROUGH in a SPITFIRE before lunch. Two new Officers were posted to the Squadron as from 18th MAY - Pilot Officers N.E. MARTINEAU and T.S. WADE. Operational flying practices were carried out during the day. Owing to bad visibility, Night Flying was cancelled. ATTACK ALARM test was made by station.

21/05/40

Weather is still very good. Pilot Officers WADE and WELLUM reported for flying duties today. A signal was received cancelling posting of P/O. MARTINEAU. Flying practice was carried out as usual during the day but Night Flying was cancelled owing to a

change in the weather. An escort flight was made to FRANCE this morning by THREE SPITFIRES.

22/05/40

Heavy rain is falling this morning, with bad visibility. An escort of THREE SPITFIRES left at 1000 hours for FRANCE with a FLAMINGO. F/Lt. GREEN who was in command, had a forced landing at KEMPTON PARK RACECOURSE. Later in the day he returned and the machine was flown back unharmed. Pilot Officers WADE and WELLUM went over to UXBRIDGE after lunch to commence a course on R/T procedure. The Squadron returned to NORTHOLT about 2100 hours from HORNCHURCH.

23/05/40

The whole Squadron left at dawn for HORNCHURCH where they commenced Patrol flying over the FRENCH COAST. At about 0830 hours they ran into six MESSERSCHMITTS and a dog fight ensued. The result was a great victory for 92 SQUADRON and all six GERMAN machines Me's 109 were brought down with only one loss to us. It is with the greatest regret that we lost PILOT OFFICER P.A.G.LEARMOND in this fight. He was seen to come down in flames over DUNKERQUE. In the afternoon the squadron went out again on patrol and this time encountered at least FORTY MESSERSCHMITTS flying in close formation. The result of this fight was another seventeen GERMAN machines Me.s 110 were brought down and 92 SQUADRON LOST SQUADRON LEADER R.J.BUSHELL - the COMMANDING OFFICER - FLYING OFFICER J.GILLIES and Sgt. P. KLIPSCH (566457). FLIGHT LIEUTENANT

C.P.GREEN was wounded in the leg and is now in Hospital at SHORNCLIFFE. The remainder of the Squadron returned to HORNCHURCH badly 'shot-up' with SEVEN SPITFIRES unserviceable. It has been a glorious day for the SQUADRON, with TWENTY- THREE GERMAN MACHINES brought down, but the loss of the COMMANDING OFFICER and the THREE OTHERS has been a very severe blow to us all, and to the SQUADRON which was created and trained last October by our late SQUADRON LEADER.

NORTHOLT/HORNCHURCH

24/05/40

Another Patrol was carried out at 0830 hours from Hornchurch and another 7 MESSERSCHMITTS were attacked and brought down. This time we had only two losses, indeed one was only a slight casualty. FLIGHT LIEUTENANT TUCK was slightly wounded in the leg, but is able to continue the good work. FLYING OFFICER CAZENOVE forced landed on the land at CALAIS and it is supposed that he is now in enemy hands. Showers of rain during the day.

25/05/40

COMMANDING OFFICER SANDERS

A further Patrol was carried out in the morning from Hornchurch and a DORNIER was attacked and brought down. In the afternoon the Squadron moved to DUXFORD to rest and re-equip.

SQUADRON LEADER SANDERS is now posted to the Squadron as COMMANDING OFFICER. The maintenance Flight and Administration will remain at Northolt.

NORTHOLT/DUXFORD

26/05/40

As the Squadron is now resting at DUXFORD there is nothing to report. The weather continues fair with occasional heavy showers.

27/05/40

Rain occasionally during the day. S/Ldr. SANDERS reported to NORTHOLT today and inspected what remains of 92 SQUADRON here. Two Pilots came over to take the two new serviceable SPITFIRES to HORNCHURCH this afternoon. P/O.s WADE & WELLUM have now flown SPITFIRES and are in training at DUXFORD.

28/05/40

The weather is very good at present. As the COMMANDING OFFICER and the PILOTS are at present resting and re-equipping at DUXFORD there is little to report as to actual flying operations.

29/05/40

Bright and clear weather. A signal from HEADQUARTERS FIGHTER COMMAND was received stating that the SQUADRON would remain at NORTHOLT, but the Operations would be carried out from HORNCHURCH. At present there are THIRTY N.C.O's

and MEN at NORTHOLT consisting of the Administration staff and some aircraft hands. FORTY-EIGHT hours leave was granted to the whole of 92 SQUADRON by H.Q.11 GROUP on account of the splendid work done by all during the last six months. 25% of the Squadron commenced this leave as from today.

30/05/40

The weather continues good. It is understood that a patrol of 92 SQUADRON operated over the FRENCH COAST yesterday. No losses were sustained by us.

31/05/40

P/O. STEWART who was granted leave to go to the AIR MINISTRY returned, and has gone to report for flying duties with the SQUADRON AT DUXFORD. The weather is very good again today.

NORTHOLT

01/06/40

The weather continues warm and clear, P/O. WIESE, the SQUADRON INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, has now joined the SQUADRON. He took over all maps and Intelligence O. books from the Adjutant. "A" Flight at COLTISHALL was sent up on a false Raid today.

02/06/40

Again the weather is very good. 92 SQUADRON again covered itself with glory over the FRENCH coast. It shot down fourteen

enemy bombers and four fighters without any loss to the Squadron. It was a grand show. The SQUADRON has now over 50 machines to its credit. At dusk the SQUADRON flew over to MARTLESHAM HEATH so that an offensive patrol of four squadrons will be able to take off tomorrow before dawn.

03/06/40

The latter part of last night was very misty and only BLUE section took off for the patrol at 0340 hours. These were almost at once recalled and despite the low lying fog they all managed to land safely. The SQUADRON later on in the day returned to DUXFORD. The weather remains perfect.

04/06/40

Low unbroken cloud. The patrol was cancelled and the whole SQUADRON flew to NORTHOLT. The rest of the Squadron arrived at NORTHOLT later in the day with the exception of W/O. MOORING and 20 men of the Maintenance flight. The Squadron has to remain here until further notice. As the weather was misty and visibility bad, several machines had to land at other aerodromes till the mist cleared. P/O. WADE crashed the MASTER at HEMEL HEMPSTEAD owing to bad visibility and lack of good airmanship. The MASTER was badly damaged but P/O. WADE and his passenger Sgt. PILOT RAMSAY were unhurt. The SQUADRON came to READINESS at 1000 hours.

05/06/40

Beautiful summer weather with great heat during the day. The SQUADRON has now settled down and is doing the usual available and readiness duties with the other Squadron at the STATION.

06/06/40

Another beautiful day. There is nothing to report as regards the SQUADRON as they continue with the usual STATION duties.

07/06/40

Good weather continues. W/O. MOORING and his men arrived tonight at NORTHOLT after some difficulty in getting away from HORNCHURCH. Practice flying in the afternoon.

08/06/40

Very hot again today. Instructions were received at noon today from H.Q. 11 GROUP that 92 SQUADRON had to move to HORNCHURCH forthwith. GROUP CAPTAIN VINCENT very kindly arranged a delay in the move until tomorrow morning. The rest of the day was occupied with packing and getting ready to move. A small advance party under W/O. BENNETT left for HORNCHURCH this evening. Much regret is felt by all 92 SQUADRON on leaving NORTHOLT where we have received the greatest kindness from everyone in the STATION.

HORNCHURCH

09/06/40

92 SQUADRON is now stationed at HORNCHURCH and is sharing a hangar and offices with the Headquarters Staff of 74 SQUADRON. The move from NORTHOLT was carried out without a hitch and apart from CPL. BURTON and five men the whole SQUADRON was settled down into their new quarters by mid-day today. The machines came over during the morning. The weather was very close and hot until about 1600 hours when thunder storm broke and heavy rain fell.

10/06/40

Operational flying and duties were commenced and the SQUADRON was available most of the day. There are other SPITFIRE SQUADRONS stationed here at present, Nos. 54, 65 and the Headquarters of 74. In the evening a signal was received posting two non-operational Pilots to 610 SQUADRON at GRAVESEND. P/O. STEWART and Sgt. RAMSAY were instructed to report in the morning.

11/06/40

The weather remains good with ground mist in the morning. The Squadron remains at readiness and available most of the day and the PILOTS spend all their time at the DISPERSAL POINTS. There is nothing to report as everything appears to be quiet as regards SPITFIRE SQUADRONS at present.

12/06/40

Another beautiful day. Practice flying was carried out during the day in perfect weather conditions. The SQUADRON has now settled down to its new STATION and the PILOTS are sharing readiness and available duties with the other SQUADRONS.

13/06/40

The weather today is dull and misty, at 1300 hours the SQUADRON is released for 24 hours. 50% of the PILOTS may leave the STATION but are subject to instant recall. The weather improved during the morning and it became bright and hot for the rest of the day.

14/06/40

The SQUADRON became available again at 1300 hours. It is a beautiful day again with good flying conditions. S/Ldr. SANDERS is attending a conference at NORTHOLT this afternoon. At Pay Parade a warning was read to all ranks by the ADJUTANT, in the absence of the COMMANDING OFFICER, regarding the imparting of information to civilians by Airmen and Soldiers on and off duty.

15/06/40

The weather remains fine and warm. There is nothing to report as the SQUADRON is standing by on the usual operational duties.

16/06/40

Another beautiful day. The SQUADRON is settling down to its new station but there is no activity and not much flying. A patrol took

place over FRANCE this evening. The COMMANDING OFFICER leading with three other machines. They were away for about two hours and the only one hit was F/Lt. TUCK's machine which had a wing tip damaged with A.A. fire. They returned with much information regarding FRENCH aerodromes now in enemy hands.

17/06/40

A very fine day again. Usual duties were carried out today and the PILOTS did some flying in the afternoon.

18/06/40

Very warm and fine again. The SQUADRON was ordered to move to PEMBREY in S.WALES on very short notice. This movement was carried out without any hitch and most of the SQUADRON were at PEMBREY by the evening.

PEMBREY

19/06/40

PEMBREY is to be a new FIGHTER STATION and at present everything is in rather a mess as regards DISPERSAL POINTS etc. There is no operations as yet and no STATION INTELLIGENCE. As Raids have commenced now in ENGLAND the Pilots are at READINESS most of the time. The weather remains very good.

20/06/40

The SQUADRON has now settled down to its new quarters and is gradually getting used to the new aerodrome. P/O. WELLUM ran

into a starter battery while taxing a SPITFIRE today and caused the propeller to become unserviceable. No other damage was caused to the machine. Some flying was done during the day. The weather remains perfect.

21/06/40

There is nothing to report today. The weather remains very good.

22/06/40

Another good day. Usual duties carried out by 92.

23/06/40

Dull with some rain in the morning. This STATION is still without an OPERATIONS room, but conditions for operational flying are improving. The R/T. is now fairly satisfactory. The weather cleared up in the afternoon.

24/06/40

Good weather again today. Usual duties and some flying continued during the day. A YELLOW warning was received during the night, and the STATION turned out. The DEFENCE scheme does not seem to be very good, but now that 92 SQUADRON has settled in and is getting to know the STATION an improvement will soon be made.

25/06/40

Another beautiful day. The new STATION COMMANDER arrived, W/Cmdr. HUTCHINSON, and S/LDR. BUDD the new OPERATIONS OFFICER. 92 is now sending SPITFIRES to HORNCHURCH to

have the new D.H. AIRSCREW fitted. F/Lt. KINGCOME was the first to go yesterday to have this done. It is to take about a day and a half to complete. Sgt. OAKLEY with some men are at HORNCHURCH to do this work. F/Lt. TUCK is going to HORNCHURCH tomorrow to receive his D.F.C. from H.M. the KING. The congratulations and best wishes of the whole SQUADRON go with him.

26/06/40

Slight mist with some rain in the morning. P/O. WRIGHT and P/O. WILLIAMS had a forced landing near ST. ATHAN today and damaged the Port wing of the MAGISTER. Practice flying was carried out with a HAMPDEN today over the aerodrome.

27/06/40

Good weather continued. Usual operational duties being carried out without anything unusual happening. The D.H. propellers are gradually being fitted to the SPITFIRES at HORNCHURCH; so far we have three fitted with these propellers.

28/06/40

The morning was cloudy with rain but later in the day the sun came out and the rest of the day was clear. Some practice flying was carried out. Nothing to report apart from an occasional YELLOW warning at night.

29/06/40

Heavy rain until noon today. Three of our SPITFIRES went off about 1000 hours as a report came in that enemy aircraft were over CARDIFF. After a patrol they returned without seeing anything. An alarm was sounded in the STATION and DEFENCE posts were manned for half-an-hour.

30/06/40

A beautiful day again. Usual operational flying was carried out during the day.

01/07/40

Another good day. One section was sent off at 1000 hours on a report of enemy aircraft over CARDIFF. They returned without making any contact with enemy patrol. In the evening another section went to HULLAVINGTON for night patrol but did not report anything. A RED warning was sounded in the STATION at midnight tonight. P/O. BARTLEY left for HORNCHURCH to get Constant Speed Airscrew.

02/07/40

Bright sun and clear sky today. Apart from one or two patrols over the coast there is nothing to report.

03/07/40

Good weather continues today after a night of heavy rain. The usual section from HULLAVINGTON returned this morning without having had any activity during the night.

04/07/40

Good weather all day. YELLOW Section consisting of P/O. EDWARDS, P/O. SAUNDERS and Sgt. FOKES, shot down a He. 111 in the afternoon near WESTON. P/O. EDWARDS and Sgt. FOKES landed beside the GERMAN crashed machine and took the PILOT, who was wounded in the foot, prisoner. The other three of the GERMAN crew were killed in the crash. P/O. SAUNDERS fired at another He.111, which is believed to have crashed into the sea. P/O. BARTLEY was sent up after an enemy raider at 2300 hours but failed to make contact.

05/07/40

RED section returned from HULLAVINGTON P/O. EDWARDS returned from FULTON with souvenirs captured from the He.111. RED SECTION chased a He. 111 down the coast in the afternoon. On the way back P/O. BARTLEY's engine failed after a slow roll and he had to land in the bog. There is some doubt whether it will be possible to save the SPITFIRE as it is sinking in the mud.

06/07/40

Weather still very good. Occasional alarms and YELLOW warnings took place during the day, when a section was sent up without encountering any enemy aircraft.

07/07/40

Rain and cloud. Not much flying during the day.

08/07/40

Several sections went off during the morning and BLUE SECTION shot down a Do.17 over BRISTOL. SECTION led by F/Lt. TUCK, with P/O. HOLLAND and Sgt. HAVERCROFT.

09/07/40

There is nothing to report today. The weather remains fair and warm.

10/07/40

Good weather conditions. The SQUADRON has discontinued to send a SECTION to HULLAVINGTON at night. An Air Raid took place at noon today, and on a Powder Factory near the aerodrome 3 bombs were dropped killing 12 and injuring 14. Our SQUADRON went up but did not contact enemy aircraft.

11/07/40

Heavy cloud with rain in the evening. A gale warning was issued. Not much flying took place.

12/07/40

Very wet day with high wind. No flying till late afternoon. Low clouds. RED warning at Midnight for half-an-hour.

13/07/40

Beautiful day again. RED warning at 1000 hours. No enemy aircraft seen. Usual patrols were made by the SQUADRON in the morning and evening.

14/07/40

Beautiful weather continues. The usual patrols were carried out today but no enemy aircraft were seen. Night flying was carried out in bright moonlight and clear sky.

15/07/40

Another fine day. P/O. WATLING reported for duty with 92 SQUADRON this morning. The usual patrols were carried out but nothing was reported by the Pilots. Night flying took place. The general defence situation of this STATION is improving and A.A. Guns and Searchlights are now in the vicinity. F/Lt. TUCK Forced Landed near PLYMOUTH.

16/07/40

Rain and low clouds. F/O. PATERSON has been posted to 92 and P/O. WATLING has gone on a course at O.T.U. ASTON DOWN. Usual patrols took place.

17/07/40

The weather continues unsettled with low clouds and occasional sun. Two warnings came through and P/O. SAUNDERS contacted a Ju.88 over BRISTOL. It got away after P/O. SAUNDERS had used up all his ammunition and had received several bullet holes in his wings.

18/07/40

High wind and showers during the day. P/O. BRYSON went before the A.O.C. in connection with his low flying at the DUTCH camp. He received a Reprimand.

19/07/40

A very wet and stormy day. Two warnings were given and the usual patrols were carried out. Two RED warnings were sounded during the night.

20/07/40

Stormy weather with high wind and showers. One or two alarms were received but the patrols did not encounter any enemy aircraft all day. The weather cleared in the evening, but there was a very high wind. A RED warning came through during the night.

21/07/40

Still a high wind but the sun is shining again. A few small clouds but otherwise the sky is clear. The usual patrols were carried out. Nothing further to report.

22/07/40

Beautiful day. The COMMANDING OFFICER returned this afternoon. Sgt. FOKES crashed a SPITFIRE last night by overshooting the flare path on landing. The usual patrols took place and Night Flying commenced at dusk. Several alarms caused Sections to go up during the night but no enemy aircraft were encountered.

23/07/40

Good weather. Usual patrols carried out. Night flying took place.

24/07/40

Dull and cloudy. A SECTION led by F/Lt. KINGCOME with P/O. BRYSON and F/O. PATERSON encountered a Ju. 88 this morning about 0730 hours over PORTHCAWL. They gave chase and brought it down at ILFRACOMBE on the DEVON coast. One GERMAN baled out at 20 yards and was killed. The remainder of the crew of three got out of the burning machine but our PILOTS were unable to know if they were injured or not. Later it was ascertained that one of the crew had been injured, but that the other two were uninjured.

25/07/40

Cloudy again today. The usual patrols were carried out during the morning.

26/07/40

The weather remains good with no cloud. Sgt. BARRACLOUGH crashed last night when landing owing to a burst tyre which appears to have burst when he took off. He was unhurt but the aircraft was badly damaged. Several patrols were sent off without contacting enemy aircraft. The usual Night Flying was carried out and a RED warning was sounded about 1230 hours.

27/07/40

Clear day all day. Patrols went up. Nothing to report. Air Raid took place at 2330 and bombs were dropped close to the STATION at KIDWELLY brick works. Three of our machines went up and owing to the failure of R/T. on P/O. WADE's machine he got lost and after several hours in the air was forced to bale out over EXETER. He got down safely but the machine was a write off.

28/07/40

Clear day. Usual patrols carried out. Night flying.

29/07/40

Weather clear and dry. Nothing to report from patrols. A RED warning at night. No contact with enemy aircraft and no bombs were dropped.

30/07/40

Good weather with cloud in the morning. Quiet day with no calls on the READINESS Sections.

31/07/40

Another quiet day. Several patrols were made. Nothing was reported. A beautiful clear day. A RED Warning was sounded during last night.

01/08/40

Bright clear weather continues. One or two patrols were made without any enemy aircraft being seen by our pilots. The nightly air raid warning was sounded at 2320 hours.

02/08/40

Good weather with some heat today. A new Spitfire was delivered today from TERN HILL. Usual patrols over the coast during the day. Night flying carried out.

03/08/40

More heat with clear sky. P/O. WATLING returned from No. 5 O.T.U. ASTON DOWN and is operational today. Another Air Raid last night.

04/08/40

Beautiful day. Bombs were dropped each side of the Station last night, some at Kidwelly and others close to the powder Factory. Patrols took place along the coast during the day. No enemy aircraft were encountered. Night flying as usual.

05/08/40

A change in the weather today. Low clouds, very little activity. Cooler toward evening with slight rain. Raid at 2330 hours. No bombs were dropped.

06/08/40

Clear sky and settled conditions again today. The usual patrols were sent out but there was nothing to report. No warning was given during the night.

07/08/40

The good weather continues. A few patrols were ordered out during the day, but nothing was seen. Night flying as usual.

08/08/40

Nothing to report today. The weather was dull with cloud. An Air Raid warning was sounded at 2330 hours. A section was sent up above the clouds.

09/08/40

Dull with high wind. Some patrols were made during the day. Low clouds and some rain in the evening and more rain during the night.

10/08/40

High winds and clouds. Nothing to report today as no patrols were called for. Bright moonlight night with an air raid warning at 2300 hours.

11/08/40

Beautiful day with bright sun. Nine Spitfires took off during the morning but returned without contacting enemy aircraft. Night flying in moonlight. Raid warning sounded as usual at 2300 hours.

12/08/40

Bright and clear today. No activity in the air. A few sections took off in the morning without any result. Clear night. Usual warning about midnight.

13/08/40

Dull with clouds. Several patrols were ordered up during the day. Eleven Spitfires left here at 1545 hours. Blue Section, F/Lt. TUCK, P/O. WATLING and Sgt. HAVERCROFT contacted a JUNKERS 88 over the sea which they brought down between them. They all returned here by 1835 hours. Low clouds in the evening. Three warnings were given during the night.

14/08/40

The weather remains good with clear skies. A patrol lead by F/Lt. TUCK brought down a JUNKERS 88 this evening. P/O. WATLING and Sgt. BARRACLOUGH shared the honour.

(SIDENOTE. Cannot trace from F.C.C.R. and Combat Reports)

15/08/40

Another clear day with some heat. Several patrols went off during the day without contacting any enemy aircraft. At about 1900 (1730?) hours however, a Section consisting of F/Lt. TUCK, P/O. WATLING and Sgt. HAVERCROFT contacted three JUNKERS 88 and F/Lt. TUCK brought down two of them. These were later confirmed. P/O. WILLIAMS and P/O. WRIGHT brought down a HEINKEL 111 with another HEINKEL 111 confirmed.

(SIDENOTE. 14th August No. 92 Squadron not engaged in combat on 15th August)

16/08/40

Dull with low clouds. Several bombs were dropped last night within a few miles of the STATION. No damage was done. A few patrols were made today without anything to report.

17/08/40

Very warm day with clear sky. A few patrols went up. It was decided to move "A" FLIGHT to BIBURY tomorrow under F/Lt. KINGCOME. They are to become operational at BIBURY at 1500 hours tomorrow.

18/08/40

Dull with mist which cleared during the morning. "A" FLIGHT left for BIBURY in three transport aircraft. The first two leaving at 1100 hours. The third was unserviceable and the remainder of the party went by road in the evening. A message was received from OPERATIONS NORTHOLT that F/Lt. TUCK had brought down a JUNKERS 88 at TONBRIDGE on his way home from BROOKLANDS. His SPITFIRE had been badly shot up and was almost out of control so he baled out and landed safely. He is now at NORTHOLT uninjured.

19/08/40

The weather remains fine. Slight cloud and a high wind. PEMBROKE DOCKS were bombed this afternoon and several oil

tankers set on fire. During the night three warnings were sounded in PEMBRY.

20/08/40

Clear weather with strong wind. A report has been received from P/O. WADE of yesterday date. At about 1500 hours yesterday the landing field at BIBURY was bombed and machine gunned by a JUNKERS 88. Considerable damage was done to one SPITFIRE and others were hit. One Airman on defence duty was killed by machine-gun fire. YELLOW SECTION took off at once, led by F/O. PATERSON. They chased the JUNKERS 88 South and caught up with it in the SOLENT. Both F/O. PATERSON and P/O. WADE attacked it and brought it down into the sea. P/O. WADE had difficulty in getting back over the land on account of his engine which had been hit. He eventually Forced Landed with wheels up in a small field. His engine by that time was on fire and after he had got clear it exploded.

21/08/40

The weather continues fine with rather high wind. Nothing to report as regards enemy action today in this area.

22/08/40

Dull with low clouds, slightly colder. One or two patrols went off without seeing any enemy aircraft. Rain fell in the afternoon and the clouds came very low. No Air Raid warnings have been sounded at night for several nights. No Night Flying to-night.

23/08/40

Dull with some rain, much cooler. An alarm was sounded at 1045 hours this morning and the whole STATION took cover for about half-an-hour. All personnel of 92 SQUADRON went to the Shelters in a matter of minutes when the alarm was sounded.

24/08/40

Brighter today with some heat. Another alarm was sounded during the morning. No enemy aircraft were seen by our Pilots on the patrols.

25/08/40

Beautiful day with clear sky. F/Lt. TUCK brought down a DORNIER 17 or 215 off ST. GOWANS HEAD. It was seen to crash into the sea at about 1800 hours. F/Lt. TUCK himself was damaged and had to land in a field. He was slightly injured in the leg.

26/08/40

Another clear day, not much activity in the air all day. Several patrols were made.

27/08/40

Slight cloud today. "A" FLIGHT is now here and "B" FLIGHT is at BIBURY. F/Lt. TUCK is unfit for flying for 3 days. Not much activity today to report from our patrols.

28/08/40

A few patrols were made by 92 SQUADRON today but no enemy aircraft were seen. The weather is clear and bright.

29/08/40

A report has been received from BIBURY that P/O. HARGREAVES lost his way last night (SIDENOTE; 27/8/40) when Night Flying and crashed landed at MARTLESHAM HEATH. He was uninjured but the aircraft was badly damaged. Several patrols were made today but no contact was made with any enemy aircraft. F/Lt. TUCK has returned to PEMBREY and was seen by the MEDICAL OFFICER today. He has to be medically boarded tomorrow as he is suffering from minor injuries sustained in his crash last SUNDAY.

30/08/40

Good weather continues and much activity continues along this Coast at night. P/O. WRIGHT shot down an enemy a/c last night while he was on patrol from BIBURY.

31/08/40

Another bright clear day. Sgt. HAVERCROFT crashed on landing at BIBURY last night owing to a ground mist. The machine was badly damaged but he was unhurt. More raids were carried out last night on this coast by enemy a/c. No bombs were dropped near the Station.

01/09/40

Hot cloudless day. Not much activity during the day. One patrol in the evening but nothing was seen.

02/09/40

The weather continues hot and dry, but clouded over for Night Flying. Nothing to report.

03/09/40

"A" Flight came back from BIBURY. Weather still warm and fine. Not much enemy activity.

04/09/40

New arrangement started. "A" Flight doing Night Flying for one week, and "B" Flight all day flying. A few patrols were made but nothing was seen. F/Lt. GREEN visited the Squadron whilst on sick leave. He had been wounded in the Dunkirk operations on 23 MAY.

05/09/40

Cloudy and dull most of the morning, but cleared up later on. There was one patrol but nothing was seen. Very quiet during the night.

06/09/40

Beautifully fine weather continues. Three sorties in the morning but nothing was seen. Slight enemy activity during the evening. The nightly alarm was sounded outside camp.

07/09/40

Clouds at 2,000 ft. but otherwise very clear. Another patrol was ordered but again nothing was seen. Usual warnings at night. Camp siren not sounded though.

PEMBREY AND BIGGIN HILL

08/09/40

"A" and "B" Flights moved to BIGGIN HILL today. Personnel and equipment moved by air transport. Duty - relieving other Squadrons at BIGGIN HILL. Indication of more action greatly welcomed by the Squadron. Weather was fair, heavy clouds and strong S.E. wind.

BIGGIN HILL

09/09/40

Fair cloudy weather. First activity not until late afternoon when Squadron intercepted Me. 109's close to AERODROME. S/Ldr. SANDERS - 1 He 111 and 1 Me 109 probable. F/Lt. KINGCOME one Me. 109 probable. P/O. SAUNDERS and P/O. WATLING wounded in combat with 7 Me. 109's. P/O. WRIGHT'S machine badly shot up but pilot escaped unhurt. On another patrol no luck.

10/09/40

Cloud at 5,000 ft. No patrols in the morning. After 1500 hours two patrols in quick succession. One Do 17 and one Me. 110 destroyed. Enemy activity at night continues. A.A barrage is terrific, like

bursts of machine-gun fire sometimes it is so intensive. Squadron personnel acclimatising to this barrage at night and managing to get some rest.

11/09/40

Cloudy day. A large formation of bombers with fighter escort was intercepted by the Squadron between DUNGNESS-RYE-LONDON at 20 - 25,000 ft. SEVEN E/A destroyed. P/O. Edwards and P/O. HARGREAVES - MISSING. Usual night activity.

12/09/40

Very cloudy in the morning. No enemy activity today. A few patrols were made but nothing was seen. Night Raiders still continue to drop bombs around the AERODROME. Golf links very adjacent seem to suffer most.

13/09/40

Low cloud all the morning cleared partially in the afternoon. No activity by squadron. Remainder of personnel arrived this afternoon from PEMBREY. A.A. Barrage still heavy.

14/09/40

Much cloud during the day. An attack was attempted in the evening. 92 Squadron engaged the enemy and damaged several Me. 109's. None confirmed. Road convoy arrived today. P/O. M^CGOWAN had to abandon aircraft through enemy action and was wounded, and Sgt. MANN.

15/09/40

Weather fair but fine. Enemy intercepted at midday CANTERBURY MAIDSTONE AREA. S/Ldr. SANDERS destroyed a Do 17 and many more were damaged including fighters. Another large formation intercepted at 1450 hours and two He 111 definitely destroyed besides many others damaged, mostly bombers. P/O. HOLLAND forced to abandon aircraft – slightly injured on landing and admitted to E.M.S. East Grinstead. Night activity continues. SOUTH CAMP appears to be immune to bombing, perhaps LONDON main objective of enemy.

16/09/40

Cloudy but fine day. Squadron patrolled coast and intercepted small enemy patrols over coast. No results, or combats.

17/09/40

Bad weather today. No activity during the morning. A patrol in the afternoon but it was not successful. Bad weather did not deter enemy from usual night activity.

18/09/40

Weather fine, with patches of cloud about 5,000 ft., but clear above. Squadron took-off at 0915 hours on patrol. Enemy intercepted and a Do 17 was confirmed by P/O. BARTLEY. Squadron again on patrol at 1555 hours with 66 Squadron. Enemy was intercepted. Two He. 111 were destroyed by F/Lt. KINGCOME and one Ju 88 by P/O. HILL. P/O. MOTTRAM injured – P/O's BARTLEY AND PATTISON forced landed but were unhurt.

Squadron still given good account of itself. Enemy activity at night continues.

19/09/40

Weather fine with broken cloud continued all day. Two a/c took off to intercept enemy over BASE. Ju. 88 seen and intercepted. Although lost in cloud several times e/a was finally seen flying over DOVER with smoke pouring from both engines and tail. No further activity today. Night raiders still pass over the AERODROME each night on way to LONDON. A.A. Barrage seems most effective.

20/09/40

Weather fine, but layers of cloud from 4 - 9,000ft. Ten aircraft took-off in the a.m. and intercepted formation of Me. 109's who surprised the Blue section from behind and above. P/O. HILL crashed and burned out in DOVER AREA and Sgt. EYES crashed in the sea. S/Ldr. SANDERS destroyed a Me. 109 and another was damaged by P/O. WADE.

21/09/40

Weather fine, still plenty of cloud and wind. Enemy attacks were made with large fighter escorts. Squadron attacked and suffered one aircraft badly shot up. Bombers forced to turn back. Everybody now acclimatised to heavy A.A. gunfire every night.

22/09/40

Ten-tenths cloud with wind and rain. A typical autumn day. No machines left ground at all during day. Weather in channel must

have been terrific and not at all good for the supposed invasion attempt. An air of expectation hung about the Camp today. Pilots were undoubtedly glad of this little break afforded by the dismal weather.

23/09/40

Weather fine with cumulus cloud. Squadron took-off at 0923 hrs to patrol GRAVESEND and intercepted enemy over TONBRIDGE AREA. Two Me. 109's were confirmed. P/O. PATTISON managed to land aircraft with severe thigh wound and was admitted to PRESTON HALL HOSPITAL MAIDSTONE. No further combats during the day. A clear night was made use of by the enemy for bombing in and around LONDON.

24/09/40

Weather still fine. Early interception made over ROCHFORD AREA at 0845 hrs. Sgt. FOKES made a Ju. 88 turn over on its back, but not seeing it crash it was classed as a Probable. Several other aircraft were damaged including two Me 109's. P/O. J. BRYSON a much liked Canadian was shot down and crashed at NORTH WEALD. He had last been seen diving into a large formation of Me 109's. Sgt. ELLIS crash landed at GRAVESEND but was unhurt. S/Ldr LISTER who was posted to us on the 20th for supernumerary duties was wounded in the wrist and legs. He brought his aircraft back to Biggin Hill where he was at once admitted to hospital. Usual night activity around the aerodrome. Ten of our aircraft acted as covering screen to bombers going to FRANCE.

25/09/40

Weather still fine and clear. Squadron proceeded to HAWKINGE for day period, but although enemy aircraft were seen no interceptions were made. Nothing further to report. P/O. PATTISON placed on D. I. list. (dangerously ill)

26/09/40

Weather fine and haze first thing, but large clouds came up later. Green Section intercepted two Dorniers. Section Leader P/O. WRIGHT attacked both aircraft one of which was confirmed by Observer Corps at Hailsham. Nothing further to report for today.

27/09/40

S/Ldr A.M MACLACHLAN posted to COMMAND today. S/Ldr. SANDERS non-effective burns on hand. Weather fine but with thin clouds. Ideal for fighters. First "scramble" came about 0900 hours. 92 Squadron along with 72 Squadron sent to intercept large formation of Fighters and Bombers. We attacked bombers - Do 17's and He 111's before enemy fighter escort could reach them. 3 Bombers were destroyed, one Me 110 destroyed and a probable Do 17 with two other bomber damaged. We lost A/ F/Lt. J. A. PATERSON and F/Sgt. SYDNEY two experienced Pilots in this combat which took place over wide area. Ten Spitfires took off at 1145 hours to joint two other Squadrons over BASE. One of our pilots "weaving" saw several Me 109's and attacked one which was badly damaged. In the third sortie of the day eleven Spitfires took-off at 1445 hours. 20 Ju 88's were intercepted 13 of these were

destroyed and a Me 109 damaged. Fighter escort of Me 109's too late to stop our aircraft from splitting bomber formation up. Sgt. OLDFIELD was killed during this combat. P/O. WRIGHT appointed ACTING FLIGHT LIEUTENANT.

28/09/40

Weather fine and clear. No interception today after the heavy losses that were inflicted on us yesterday. Two patrols were made and on the latter several Me 109's were seen but quickly turned tail when they saw us. Enemy activity confined to night attacks, LONDON being the main objective.

29/09/40

Weather fine and cloudy. A Do 17 intercepted between MAIDSTONE and CANTERBURY by P/O. WILLIAMS who badly damaged it, but as the Do 17 spiralled into heavy cloud he was unable to see the full result of his attack. Nothing else to report. Night activity of course.

30/09/40

Weather fine with lots of cloud - about 8/10ths at 4 - 7,000ft. First action came at lunch time. The Squadron took-off and joined 72 and 66 over BASE and made for MAIDSTONE. One formation of Me 109's was passed, but as the objective - Bombers - was then not seen they attacked the Me 109's. During combat several Do 215's were sighted and some Hurricanes and Spitfires intercepted them. Result 1 Do 215 probable 2 Me 109's probable and 2 damaged. Activity at night continues. In a sortie about 1630 hours

A/F/Lt. WRIGHT was wounded by pieces of explosive cannon shell and is in SOUTHLANDS HOSPITAL SHOREHAM, with thigh wounds. However he destroyed one Me 109 which he followed until it fell into the sea. Squadron has given good account of itself since being at BIGGIN HILL. Pilots disperse themselves at night in houses several miles from the AERODOME.

01/10/40

The weather is clear and bright. Four sorties were made today and although several Me 109's were seen no interception took place by our Squadron. P/O. B. MAITLAND THOMPSON arrived as a new posting to this unit. F/Lt. C.P. GREEN reported for duty.

02/10/40

Another clear day. S/Ldr. MACLACHLIN took over the command of 92 Squadron and P/O. J.W. LUND reported for duty. Sgt. DE MONTBRON also reported for flying duties from the Free French Air Force. 92 Squadron Pilots are now sleeping out of camp at Southwood, 2 miles from BIGGIN HILL. This beautiful house has been lent by Captain McNair Scott. Five sorties took place today, but no interceptions were made.

03/10/40

Low cloud and heavy rain. Very little flying was done today as the clouds were low all day. Occasional enemy aircraft were heard above and in the clouds.

04/10/40

A sortie was made at about 1100 hours today but owing to clouds no enemy aircraft were contacted. On a later sortie at 1300 hours P/O. WILLIAMS fired at a Do 17 but it went into cloud and he was unable to find out the result of his attack.

05/10/40

Clouded and dull. Several sorties were made during the day. F/O. DRUMMOND shot down a Me 109 and a He 128. (Hs 126?) P/O. LUND got a possible Me 109. Much night activity by enemy aircraft. Heavy A.A. fire all night.

06/10/40

Very stormy weather with high wind and rain. Some bombs were dropped on the aerodrome today without doing much harm. No flying was possible owing to the low clouds. F/Lt. GREEN was sent to command a special Flight at GRAVESEND.

07/10/40

Clear and bright today. Two sorties were made during the morning, but no enemy aircraft were intercepted by this Squadron.

08/10/40

F/Lt. KINGCOME and P/O. BARTLEY awarded the D.F.C. Weather this morning exceptionally clear but rain came in about 1100 hours and continued in showers and drizzle all day.

09/10/40

S/Ldr. TUCK who was with this Squadron as a Flight Commander has been awarded a BAR to his D.F.C. and is now in command of 257 Squadron. Weather fine - heavy clouds - strong wind of gale force.

10/10/40

At 0830 hours today P/O. WILLIAMS and F/O. DRUMMOND were attacking a Do 17 over TANGMERE and collided, both of them were killed. This is the birthday of 92 SQUADRON which was formed at TANGMERE a year ago today. Clear weather, several sorties were made during the day.

11/10/40

Another clear day. Several sorties were made during the day. F/Lt. KINGCOME brought down a Me 109 in the afternoon. P/O. PATTISON was posted to 92 Squadron from No. 64 Squadron and reported for duty.

12/10/40

A very big day for the Squadron. S/Ldr. TUCK went up with his old Squadron in the morning and shot down a Me 109, this being his twentieth machine. In the afternoon the Squadron brought down another 3 Me 109's. The three pilots concerned were F/Lt. KINGCOME, P/O. WADE and Sgt. KINGABY. Several other probables were also scored. P/O. PATTINSON was shot down on his first patrol and his body was recovered at HAWKINGE.

13/10/40

Several patrols took place. The weather was clear and bright. F/Lt. KINGCOME shot down one Me 109 on the patrol which took place at 1330 hours.

14/10/40

Another clear day. Several sorties were made during the day but no interceptions were made by the Squadron

15/10/40

F/Lt. KINGCOME was wounded and baled out. He was taken to the Royal Naval Hospital at CHATHAM.

16/10/40

A clear day. 72 Squadron left BIGGIN HILL and were replaced by 74 Squadron. Contact was made with the enemy today and P/O. LUND was shot down into the sea. He was rescued by H.M.S "NYSAN" of the ROYAL NAVY.

17/10/40

Several sorties took place today but no interceptions were made.

18/10/40

Dull and wet with low clouds. No flying took place all day.

19/10/40

Dull in the morning but the sun came out after lunch. 92 Squadron was called to Readiness at 1330 hours.

20/10/40

Better day today. Three sorties were made and F/Lt. VILLA and P/O. SAUNDERS shared a Me 110 with 66 Squadron.

21/10/40

Dull with heavy rain. Very little flying today. The weather cleared a little during the afternoon when 2 sorties were made without contacting any enemy aircraft.

22/10/40

Bright sun and clear sky. No sorties had been made up to 1050 hours. Very little enemy activity today.

23/10/40

Dull with low cloud. No flying took place and no enemy aircraft were seen.

24/10/40

Brighter today. Several patrols were made and interception with Me 109's. No enemy machines were shot down and we suffered no losses.

25/10/40

Bright and clear. Several patrols today. Two Me 109's were shot down, by F/Lt. VILLA and P/O. SHERRINGTON, another probable was scored by F/Lt. VILLA.

26/10/40

COMMANDING OFFICER KENT

Dull with low clouds. 92 Squadron were at DAWN Readiness. Colder today. P/O. WATLING returned to duty from sick leave. S/Ldr. J.A. KENT arrived and took over command of 92 Squadron.

27/10/40

Clear this morning. P/O. SHERRINGTON attacked a Do 17 and scored a probable. The weather clouded over in the afternoon which prevented flying owing to ground mist. Squadron was sent off at 1730 hours and had to land at GRAVESEND owing to mist.

28/10/40

Squadron returned from GRAVESEND at noon. Several sorties were made but no enemy aircraft were encountered.

29/10/40

Bright and clear. Squadron had several sorties this morning. Two SPITFIRES were damaged through a taxiing accident, Sgt. H. BOWEN-MORRIS and Sgt. KINGABY. This afternoon the Squadron contacted several Me 110's with the following result:- 3 confirmed shot down, one probable and one damaged. The three confirmed were shot down by F/Lt. VILLA, P/O. SAUNDERS and Sgt. BOWEN-MORRIS. No losses were sustained by the Squadron.

30/10/40

Dull today with cloud. Two sorties were made in the afternoon but no enemy aircraft were encountered.

31/10/40

Dull day with low cloud. Later very heavy rain and a wind of almost gale force. No flying all day.

01/11/40

Bright and clear. Several sorties were made and in the afternoon 92 Squadron shot down 3 Me 109's, 1 Ju 88 and 1 Ju. 87. A grand day's score. They were accounted for as follows:- S/Ldr. J.A. KENT, DFC, AFC, 1 Me 109. Sgt. KINGABY, 1 Me 109. F/Lt. HOLLAND, P/O. BARTLEY and Sgt. De MONTBRON shared another Me 109. P/O. SAUNDERS shot down a Ju 87 and P/O. KINDER a Ju 88.

02/11/40

Another good day for 92 Squadron. The COMMANDING OFFICER shot down 2 Me 109's and one probable. P/O. WATLING shot down a Me 109 and F/Lt. HOLLAND repeated the performance. P/O. WELLUM damaged two other 109's. The weather clouded over in the afternoon and there was no more flying.

03/11/40

Dull with low cloud. No flying all day. Heavy rain.

04/11/40

Another dull wet day. No flying at all during the day.

05/11/40

Bright and clear today. Several sorties were made. In the afternoon during a combat with Me 109's P/O. BARTLEY shot down a Me 109. Sgt. ELLIS forced landed at GRAVESEND badly shot up. He was unhurt but the machine was CAT. 2.

06/11/40

Dull with rain in the morning. Very little flying all day. No enemy encountered on two sorties.

07/11/40

Bright and clear today. Several sorties were made but no combats were experienced. No. 66 Squadron arrived here as their aerodrome was waterlogged. 421 (Spotter) Flight is also coming to this Station. It is commanded by F/Lt. C.P. GREEN late of this Squadron.

08/11/40

Bright and clear. First sortie was made at 1030 hours. Several others were made later in the day but no enemy aircraft were seen.

09/11/40

Dull today with clouds from 10 - 30000 feet. Several sorties took off. Sgt. FOKES DFM. And Sgt. De MONTBRON shot down a Ju 88 into the sea this morning. Not much flying in the afternoon owing to bad weather.

10/11/40

Mist in the early morning but it had cleared by 1000 hours. Last night was noisy with much night raiding. Two Sorties were made today but no enemy aircraft were encountered. During the evening several bombs were dropped at the DISPERSAL POINTS and one SPITFIRE belonging to 92 Squadron was burnt and 3 others made unserviceable. 66 SQUADRON lost two burnt out and five damaged with bomb splinters. Fortunately no casualties were caused in either Squadron.

11/11/40

Clear this morning with frost. One sortie was made by 74 Squadron but 92 did not go up. Clouds came down low and rain fell at lunch time. No more flying took place during the afternoon.

12/11/40

Two sorties were made today but no enemy aircraft were encountered. Clear sky in the morning but dull later in the day.

13/11/40

Dull today. During a sortie this morning a Do 17 was set on fire by F/Lt. HOLLAND and Sgt. HAVERCROFT but it was lost in the clouds and was not seen to crash.

14/11/40

Not much flying owing to low clouds. No action with the enemy.

15/11/40

Two sorties today with splendid results. Sgt. KINGABY shot down four Me 109's confirmed. F/Lt. VILLA and Sgt. FOKES shot down one Me 109 each and P/O. BARTLEY and F/Lt.. HOLLAND damaged another. S/Ldr. KENT went on 7 days leave.

16/11/40

Very little flying on account of heavy rain.

17/11/40

Several sorties today. 92 Squadron got 3 Probables and two damaged but were unable to confirm any. Bright in the morning but dull again with rain towards evening.

18/11/40

Dull today. No flying at all during the morning. Two sorties were made in the afternoon but no contact was made with the enemy.

19/11/40

No flying took place owing to bad weather. Very low cloud. There was slight activity early in the evening.

20/11/40

Very wet day, no flying took place. Slight activity at night but the weather was very bad all night.

21/11/40

Another wet day with low clouds. 92 did not take off during the day. Very little bombing at night owing to adverse weather conditions.

22/11/40

Low clouds and rain, again no flying during the day.

23/11/40

Improvement in the weather conditions. Several Me 109's came over at 10,000 feet but 92 was not sent up as 66 and 74 Squadrons were on Readiness. Further sorties were made during the day without any contact being made with the enemy.

24/11/40

Bright and clear. A sortie was made before breakfast but nothing was seen. Two more sorties were made but no enemy aircraft were encountered.

25/11/40

Dull with low clouds in the morning. Two sorties were made during the afternoon without results. P/O. McGOWAN returned to BIGGIN HILL from sick leave.

26/11/40

Clear, cloud a very high. During a patrol this morning P/O. WADE shot at a DORNIER in the cloud but did not see any result except

for a patch of oil on the sea near the coast. No further flying during the afternoon.

27/11/40

Several sorties were made today, but no enemy aircraft were encountered. Clear and bright.

28/11/40

Clear and bright with frost. Several sorties were made. Contact was made with some Me 109's and P/O. MOTTRAM claimed a Probable. Owing to ground mist the Squadron had to land at GRAVESEND and were held there until about 1700 hours when they returned to BIGGIN HILL.

29/11/40

Bright and clear today. 92 Squadron were on Dawn Readiness. Very little flying took place owing to heavy ground mist. Biggin Hill scored its 600th enemy aircraft shot down today.

30/11/40

Bright with frost. Heavy ground mist. Two sorties made in afternoon without contacting enemy aircraft.

01/12/40

Bright and clear. In the afternoon 92 was in combat on the south coast with the following splendid result. 4 Me 109's destroyed, two probables and six others damaged. The destroyed 109's were shot

down by Ft/Lt. Villa, P/O. Saunders, Sgt. KINGABY, and P/O. MANSELL LEWIS. A very satisfactory day for 92.

02/12/40

Another clear frosty day. P/O. WADE shot down a 109 near the French coast. Several forties were made during the day.

03/12/40

Dull today. Not much activity, only section sorties were made without contact with E/A.

04/15/40

Dull in the morning. 92 was on dawn readiness but did not go up all morning. One sortie was made without any contact being made with E/A.

05/12/40

Bright and clear during the morning. 92 went on readiness at 13.00 hrs. Patrol was made in the afternoon. F/O. WRIGHT scored, one probable 109, and Sgt.(now F.O.) FOKES shot down a 109 into the sea. Sgt. FOKES, who has been with 92 since last March, and has already been awarded the D.F.M., was commissioned as a P/O. yesterday. Every effort will be made to retain him as a pilot in 92.

06/12/40

Cloudy, with high wind. The usual patrol was made in the afternoon, but no contact with E/A was made.

07/12/40

Bright and clear. No flying in the morning, but a patrol was made in the afternoon. After this patrol took off, a ground mist came up and this caused five of the squadron to land at Croydon, and two others to force land. Sgt. Le CHEMINANT crashed forced landing, and his machine was Cat III.

08/12/40

Bright and clear. A standing patrol was made in the morning, but no contact was made with enemy machines. An early warning and much activity during the night in London area.

09/12/40

Clear weather, with some high, patchy cloud. A patrol was made this afternoon without any results. Quiet night.

10/12/40

Bright and clear. A patrol took off at 1100 this morning, but no E/A were encountered. No further patrols by 92 during the day.

11/12/40

Bright and clear again. 92 was on 15 minutes at dawn. Heavy mist made flying difficult at times, but a patrol was made in the afternoon.

12/12/40

Another bright clear day. The usual patrol took place, but no E/A were seen. Not much activity during the night owing to fog.

13/12/40

Hard frost and ground mist. No flying possible this morning. A short patrol was made in the afternoon.

14/12/40

Bright and clear. No activity all morning. 92 was on readiness at dawn till 1300 hrs.

15/12/40

Bright and clear again, but a mist on the ground caused little flying to take place. No enemy raid all day.

16/12/40

Dull, with low cloud. No flying in the morning. A ground mist prevented flying all day.

17/12/40

Nothing to report again today, as no flying took place, owing to weather conditions. Bright sky but a low ground mist.

18/12/40

Bright again, with the usual ground mist. A patrol was made in the afternoon, but no E/A were encountered.

19/12/40

Heavy mist. No flying possible all day.

20/12/40

Very wet day, low clouds. No flying possible. The Squadron was released at 1300.

21/12/40

Bright and frosty. A patrol took off in the afternoon, and at 1,000 ft. over the Channel they encountered two 109's. P/O. FOKES, who was leading along with Sgt. KINGABY, shot down one 109 into the Channel, but the other got away.

22/12/40

Dull and cold. Ground mist. 92 on readiness at dawn. No flying possible owing to bad weather conditions.

23/12/40

The same conditions prevail today, and no flying took place. S/Ldr. KENT of 92 broadcast to Canada today from the B.B.C. F/Lt. KINGCOME was posted back to 92 after being N/E for nearly two months. Snow fell in the evening.

24/12/40

Slight snow on the ground. Cold and dull, with low cloud. No flying possible.

25/12/40

Christmas Day. Dull, with low clouds and ground mist all day.

26/12/40

Another day with low cloud and ground mist. Flying impossible.

27/12/40

Clearer today. The first offensive patrol was carried out today by 92. F/O. WRIGHT and P/O. MOTTRAM took off at 1250 hours. They went North and South of ABBEVILLE. F/O. WRIGHT did not see anything and did not fire his guns. He landed at SOUTHAMPTON to refuel and returned to BIGGIN HILL. He was roughly over FRENCH territory for 40 minutes. P/O. MOTTRAM shot up a staff car and a convoy of any lorries on the road, two lorries were seen to be damaged. He landed at HAWKINGE and was unable to return to BIGGIN HILL owing to weather conditions.

28/12/40

Dull with heavy ground mist. P/O. MOTTRAM returned from HAWKINGE during the day. No patrols took place owing to the bad weather conditions.

29/12/40

Bright and clear this morning. A convoy patrol was made by 92 in the afternoon. No enemy aircraft were encountered.

30/12/40

Dull with rain. No flying took place today at BIGGIN HILL.

31/12/40

Dull with low cloud. No flying possible today. Instructions were received for 92 Squadron to move to MANSTON on the 1st January, 1941.

01/01/41

Dull with hard frost. No flying took place except one or two short flights by F/Lt. VILLA. The move of 92 to MANSTON has been postponed owing to difficulties with telephone communication from MANSTON to BIGGIN.

02/01/41

Another cold day with low cloud. No flying owing to bad weather conditions.

03/01/41

Again no flying except for individual practice flights. The move to MANSTON is still uncertain. F/Lt. WRIGHT tried to reach MANSTON by air but he had to return on account of snow storms and low clouds.

04/01/41

No flying today on account of low cloud. F/O. WRIGHT went down to MANSTON by road to remain there till the SQUADRON goes.

05/01/41

Bad weather with cold and slight snow. No flying all day. The machines are being run up every so many hours on account of the severe cold.

06/01/41

More snow today and no flying possible. The move to MANSTON is still postponed owing to the weather.

07/01/41

Dull and slight snow. No flying possible again.

08/01/41

Dull again. Flying impossible owing to low cloud. Orders to prepare to move to MANSTON tomorrow.

MANSTON

09/01/41

92 SQUADRON moved to MANSTON. The weather is bright and clear. 13 machines took off from BIGGIN HILL at 1145 hours for MANSTON. The convoy arrived at MANSTON late at night but the quarters were ready and the Airmen were soon in Barracks. The whole move went well and no hitch of any kind took place. Sgt. PRITER remained at BIGGIN HILL to clear up and was in charge of the rear party.

10/01/41

Another beautiful day of sunshine. All morning was spent inspecting quarters and the general lay-out of the Station. After lunch the ACCOUNTANT OFFICER from BIGGIN HILL arrived to complete the paying of the Squadron. 92 did its first offensive patrol and escorted the bombers and escorting fighters off the French Coast and brought them home. No loss was suffered by us.

11/01/41

Dull with low cloud. The Squadron was released all day from 1100 hours. In the afternoon two 109's bobbed and machine gunned the Aerodrome but did not do any damage except for a small hole in one of the wings of a Spitfire which was in the Hanger.

12/01/41

Dull again with low cloud. No flying took place in the morning or the rest of the day.

13/01/41

Thick fog all day. No flying possible. The Squadron has now settled down to its new station.

14/01/40

Dull with fog, no flying possible.

15/01/41

Bright and clear till about 1000 hours then fog with snow came over, making flying impossible for the rest of the day. The COMMANDING OFFICER left for LONDON.

16/01/41

SQUADRON LEADER J.A. KENT, DFC, AFC, the CO of 92, was presented with the POLISH VERTUTI MILITARI, the VC of POLAND in LONDON today. The weather at MANSTON was clear in the morning and a section did a patrol near the Base. Cloud came over in the afternoon again.

17/01/41

Bright in the morning, but mist came over again in the afternoon. Very little flying took place today.

18/01/41

Dull today with low cloud. A Section took off at 1030 hours, but had to land on account of the weather which gradually became worse. By noon snow was falling with a high wind. A blizzard was blowing for the rest of the day.

19/01/41

Several inches of snow on the Aerodrome making flying impossible till later in the day when several patrols were carried out over the Base.

20/01/41

Very wet morning with low cloud and mist. No flying possible all day.

21/01/41

Again no flying owing to bad weather.

22/01/41

Clearer today. One sortie went off. P/O. FOKES and Sgt. LLOYD damaged a Do 17 over the Thames.

24/01/41

Low cloud, making flying impossible.

25/01/41

Again no flying owing to low cloud.

26/01/41

Only one sortie has been possible this week as the cloud has been almost down to ground level on the Aerodrome.

27/01/41

No flying owing to bad weather.

28/01/41

Again no flying. Clouds low.

29/01/41

Mild but low cloud prevents flying again today.

30/01/41

Low cloud this morning. No flying possible.

31/01/41

Rain and low cloud preventing all flying today.

01/02/41 Dull with very low cloud. No flying possible all day.

02/02/41

Bright and clear. Four patrols were made during the morning and a Squadron sweep of the FRENCH coast was made in the afternoon. Everyone got back without being engaged in combat. No 89 Blenheim (C.C.) Squadron is now at MANSTON and four of them did a daylight show over FRANCE today. Our pilots had to sleep at the billet tonight, and were not very comfortable there. Snow fell during the evening.

03/02/41

Snow Storm all day. P/O. WATLING went up before breakfast for an hour, as four E/A were bombing RAMSGATE. He did not make contact owing to cloud. A further patrol went off in the afternoon during a short spell of clear weather. F/O. BARTLEY made contact with a He 111, over SOUTHEND, and shot it down into the sea. This is the first victory for 92 since DECEMBER, and in this case, the cannon now fitted to the SPITFIRES proved a great success.

04/02/41

Clear this morning, a patrol was ordered off before nine o'clock. Several patrols were made today, but no E/A were encountered.

05/02/41

Bright with some high cloud. A great deal of flying was done today. Shortly after nine this morning an escort was provided for a convoy of ships, and during this an enemy attack was made on the convoy. Several of our pilots fought a Ju 87 and shot it down near the aerodrome. P/O. SAUNDERS and P/O. FOKES DFM. with two Pilots were responsible. The fight took place over the aerodrome. Both GERMAN airmen were killed. All day standing patrols were in the air and a great deal of activity continued throughout the day. P/O. KINDER and Sgt. MANN went to report on posting to No 91 SQUADRON (S/Ldr. Green ex No 92 Squadron in command) at HAWKINGE. Snowing all night.

06/02/41

There is about six inches of snow on the aerodrome this morning making flying difficult. A low ground mist is also hanging over the ground. A signal was received from Group as to the posting of three new pilots from an O.T.U. to this Squadron on the 7th. A section went up for a short trip in the late afternoon.

07/02/41

Dull today with low cloud. Two machines went up for a weather teat during the morning. Visibility was very bad. At 1145 we had a phone message from HAWKINGE that a SPITFIRE had crashed

into a hill near DEAL in the mist. This turned out to be P/O. WATLING of No 92 SQUADRON. It is very much regretted that P/O. WATLING lost his life in this crash. He Joined 92 at PEMBREY last JULY and was a very good pilot. His death is a very severe loss to us all in 92. The weather prevented flying for the rest of the day.

08/02/41

Very much milder today, and also much clearer. Some machines went up during the morning and the afternoon on patrols. No Enemy aircraft were seen.

09/02/41

Clear again today. The AIR OFFICER COMMANDING arrived and spent the morning inspecting the Station. Several machines went up during the day. No Enemy Activity.

10/02/41

Bright and clear today. A Channel sweep was made at Noon today by 92, 74 and 66 Squadrons, no Enemy aircraft were encountered. No 59 Squadron did a raid on the FRENCH coast from here which was very satisfactory. They encountered little opposition either from Enemy aircraft or FLAK. Several sorties were made during the rest of the day, and an escort was supplied for the rescue flight over the sea. On taking off at dusk P/O. MAITLAND-THOMPSON hit the chance light and crashed. He was unhurt, but the machine was CAT. E. and a total wreck. There was a full moon and a clear sky. Little enemy activity during the night.

11/02/41

Bright and clear with some frost. Three new Sgt. Pilots arrived to No 92 Squadron- Sgt. ASTON, Sgt. GASKELL, Sgt. TERRY. Some flying took place in the morning, but fog came up at noon and prevented further flying for the rest of the day. F/Lt. VILLA and F/O. LUND went to BIGGIN HILL to bring a Spitfire which had been left there in the morning.

12/02/41

Heavy ground mist all day and no flying possible. S/Ldr. J.A. KENT. DFC. AFC. went to BIGGIN HILL in the morning. Mist covered the aerodrome all day. Much colder.

13/02/41

Still misty making flying impossible. Funeral of P/O. WATLING taking place today at BIGGIN HILL. The COMMANDING OFFICER returned this evening from BIGGIN HILL. Some flying was carried out by some of the new pilots in the evening before dusk.

14/02/41

A patrol was carried out by the Squadron during the morning, but no E/A were seen. Sgt. KINGABY DFM. whilst flying alone caught sight of an E/A and gave chase across the channel. He did not catch up with it till he was over FRANCE, but he shot it down and it crashed near GRIS-NEZ in FRANCE. It was an Me 109. This brings the total bag of the Squadron up to 260. Confirmed, Probable and Damaged.

15/02/41

Clear weather today. Several patrols were made by 92 but no E/A were encountered during the day. Several E/A passed over MANSTON at a great height.

16/02/41

Dull with high wind and rain. No flying possible this morning. One or Two patrols were carried out in the afternoon. Heavy rain in the evening.

17/02/41

Bright and clear. Patrol was carried out during the morning. No encounter took place. Information was received that 92 would probably return to BIGGIN HILL on Thursday as 74 Squadron is moving here on that day. Signal received for 92 to move on Thursday to BIGGIN HILL.

18/02/41

Dull and raining. No flying possible this morning. A little flying was done in the afternoon.

19/02/41

Several patrols were made but no E/A were encountered. The advance party of 92 left for BIGGIN HILL after lunch. The Orderly Room was established at BIGGIN HILL today. The Station Officer Mess is now in the old building which was evacuated at the time of the Blitz.

BIGGIN HILL

20/02/41

The remainder of the squadron came over to BIGGIN HILL today. The pilots landed at lunch time. 74 Squadron is now in 92's place at MANSTON. General satisfaction is felt by 92 on its return to BIGGIN HILL now its parent Station. P/O. SHERRINGTON was posted as an instructor to 57 O.T.U. at HESTON. This makes the third Officer posting in the last month. P/O. KINDER and F/O. HOLLAND having been posted to 91 Squadron at HAWKINGE. (This contradicts the entry made on 05/02/41)

21/02/41

Bright and clear. The Squadron has now settled down and the billets were inspected this morning by the ADJUTANT. Everything seems satisfactory and conditions are much improved to what they were when the Squadron was last at BIGGIN HILL. The Squadron was to do a sweep with 74 and 66 Squadrons at noon, but it was postponed on account of mist. The sweep took place in the afternoon and everything went satisfactorily. No E/A were encountered.

22/02/41

The Squadron took off in the morning but did not make contact with E/A. The weather is again bright and clear. A patrol was ordered off again at 1500 hours. F/Lt. VILLA was decorated by H.M. THE KING, in LONDON today with the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS and BAR, also F/O. WRIGHT with

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS. Squadron released in the afternoon.

23/02/41

Bright and clear. The Squadron was released all morning. SQUADRON LEADER KENT. DFC. AFC. has been posted from 92 to an O.T.U. as a WING COMMANDER. S/Ldr. THOMPSON is to take over command of 92. This makes the fifth COMMANDING OFFICER since the Squadron was formed in OCTOBER 1939.

24/02/41

Heavy ground mist which prevented flying during the day.

25/02/41

Bright and clear with ground mist. S/Ldr. KENT. DFC. AFC., F/Lt. KINGCOME DFC. and P/O. BARTLEY DFC. were decorated by H.M. THE KING with the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS today. S/Ldr. RANKIN has been posted to 92 instead of S/Ldr. THOMPSON.

26/02/41

COMMANDING OFFICER RANKIN

Beautiful day with clear sky, 92 did a sweep of the FRENCH coast in conjunction with 74 and 609 Squadron's. They took off at noon, and were away about one hour and half. No enemy aircraft were encountered, and all our machines returned safely. S/Ldr. RANKIN

reported in the evening and S/Ldr. KENT DFC.AFC. returned to BIGGIN HILL for a few days.

27/02/41

Dull with very heavy rain all day. No flying possible all day. P/O. WADE went to a course for high flying at FARNBOROUGH today. S/Ldr. RANKIN was in the office to take over the OFFICER COMMANDING of 92 this morning. Posting of S/Ldr. KENT. DFC. AFC. has been changed to No 11 GROUP instead of the O.T.U. at HESTON.

28/02/41

Very heavy rain with high wind again today. No flying Possible.

01/03/41

Bright and clear. S/Ldr. KENT is flying to BOSCOMB DOWN today. Patrol carried out over MAIDSTONE at 15,000 feet by both flights. A Sweep of the FRENCH Coast was carried out with 74 Squadron. Some enemy aircraft were sighted but no interceptions took place. Weather was generally fine all day.

02/03/41

Dull weather and rain most of the day, a weather test flight was made during the day, also some cannon firing practice.

03/03/41

Bright and clear. One patrol over MAIDSTONE was carried out, also some cannon firing practice.

04/03/41

Another clear day, very little activity today.

05/03/41

Weather still remains good. S/Ldr. KENT left 92 Squadron to take up his new duties at 53 O.T.U. HESTON. A convoy patrol and a sweep of the FRENCH coast were made during the day. No enemy aircraft were encountered all day.

06/03/41

Dull and wet all day. No flying possible. S/Ldr. J. RANKIN has now taken over the duties of OFFICER COMMANDING NO 92 SQUADRON.

07/03/41

Very thick fog with rain all day. Impossible to take off from BIGGIN HILL today.

08/03/41

Better weather today. Very little activity today, some cannon firing was carried out in the morning by two spitfires.

09/03/41

A patrol of four machines were up for an hour this morning, but were recalled on account of ground mist, which thickened during the day, no further flying the rest of the day.

10/03/41

The Squadron was sent up on a patrol this morning at 15,000 feet. No enemy aircraft were seen. The weather has improved and today is bright and sunny. Some air to ground firing was carried out in the evening and F/O. WRIGHT and F/O. BARTLEY did some Night Flying later. There was a bright moon. F/O. BARTLEY unfortunately had a mishap when taxiing, owing to one wheel of the undercarriage sinking into an old bomb hole which had been filled in. The spitfire was damaged.

11/03/41

Dull and misty this morning, very little flying all day owing to ground mist.

12/03/41

No flying possible owing to fog all day.

13/03/41

Beautiful day, bright and clear. Squadron was on Readiness at Dawn and took off at 0700 HRS. Over the channel Me 109's were encountered and a fight took place in which F/Lt. WRIGHT damaged two or three enemy aircraft. ADJ. De MONTBRON got a cannon shell in the tail of the fuselage without doing serious harm to his aircraft. The Squadron landed again shortly after 0800 hrs. No further operational flying was carried out during the rest of the day.

14/03/41

Ground mist all morning making flying impossible. Some cannon firing was carried out at the ranges in the afternoon. The AIR OFFICER COMMANDING visited BIGGIN HILL today.

15/03/41

Heavy fog in the morning which developed into ground mist in the afternoon. No flying possible all day.

16/03/41

Another day with ground mist at 50 feet making flying impossible from this Station. A little clearer in the afternoon with some sun but the mists persist near the ground.

17/03/41

The Squadron was released most of the day. No flying owing to ground mist. F/O. BARTLEY left 92 on posting to 74 Squadron as a F/Lt. Great regret at his going.

18/03/41

Bright and clear. Five machines took off to patrol the MAIDSTONE line at 1030 hrs. P/O. VEITCH who reported to 92 a week ago was posted to 119 Squadron at FULTON. He left yesterday. Further patrols were made by a flight in the evening. F/Lts. KINGCOME and WRIGHT did dusk landings.

19/03/41

Bright with heavy ground mist, which cleared later in the day. The COMMANDING OFFICER with P/O. WELLUM and P/O. MAITLAND-THOMPSON took off to escort a convoy near DOVER. They landed again in an hour. The Squadron was called to readiness at 1430 hrs. Recommendations for promotion were today sent in as follows. F/Lt. KINGCOME for SQUADRON LEADER. And the following P/O's for acting Flight Lieutenants. SAUNDERS, MOTTRAM and FOKES. Eleven machines took off in the evening and were patrolling at 36,000 feet, when three were forced to land owing to engine failure. The COMMANDING OFFICER passed out owing to lack of oxygen, and regained consciousness at 12,000 feet. His engine had heated and he was forced to crash land near MAIDSTONE. Sgt. Le CHEMINANT also crash landed and ADJ. De MONTBRON crashed on landing at CHATHAM.

20/03/41

Dull today with ground mist. No flying during the morning. A little flying in the afternoon testing the ground defence guns for aiming at dive bombers.

21/03/41

Bright and clear. One operational patrol we carried out by one flight but no enemy aircraft were encountered. 'A' Flight was called to readiness at 1200 hrs, a little flying was done in the afternoon over the base, but no further operations were ordered. A night section were on readiness.

22/03/41

Dull with rain and mist. No flying all day. A new ENGINEER OFFICER reported to replaced P/O. GARLAND.

23/03/41

Another dull day with rain and mist. No flying possible today.

24/03/41

Better weather today. A patrol took off in the morning and enemy aircraft were encountered over the coast. 'B' Flight made contact with enemy aircraft. The COMMANDING OFFICER and ADJ. De MONTBRON followed what may have been a He. 113 to the FRENCH coast. The COMMANDING OFFICER fired his cannon at it and damaged it as something fell off it at the time of firing. P/O. WADE when taking off hit the chance light with his undercarriage. He was forced to crash land and damaged the machine. No further flying was carried out during the afternoon.

25/03/41

Bright and fairly clear this morning. The Squadron goes on Readiness at 1300 hrs. Some flying over base was carried out and a patrol of one flight was ordered off but was in cloud most of the time and did not see any enemy aircraft. Heavy rain and wind in the evening.

26/03/41

Dull with low cloud. Squadron at Readiness at 0900 hrs. ADJ. De MONTBRON received the commission in the F.F.A.F. today. Three

machines did a patrol over MANSTON and other four aircraft were ordered off on patrol late. No flying in the afternoon.

27/03/41

Bright early, but clouds came over later. The Squadron was at 30 minutes during the morning, but came to Readiness at 1300 hrs. 'B' Flight took off on patrol HASTINGS and 'A' followed later. Sgts. TERRY and GASKELL went to DUXFORD in the Magister to bring back a Spitfire. Sgt. TERRY posted to HENDON as a ferry pilot on spitfires for one month, when he returns to this unit.

28/03/41

Dull with low cloud. No flying possible all day owing to ground mist.

29/03/41

Another dull day with rain and mist. No flying at all in the morning.

30/03/41

Bright and clear this morning. Squadron at Readiness at 0920 hrs. Three Spitfires went to HUCKNALL for a modification. Squadron was then released for training at 1300 hrs. At 1450 hrs Squadron took off for a training flight, landed at 1620 hrs.

31/03/41

Another lovely day. Squadron at Readiness at 0540 hrs. Released for training at 0900 hrs. 4 Pilots did practice attacks. 2 Spitfires went to LEYSDOWN RANGES for cannon firing. P/O. WELLUM did

an anti-mist test at 35,000 foot. Squadron at Readiness 1245 hrs. 'B' flight did a patrol over MANSTON at 1320 hrs. Landed 1440 hrs. At 1640 hrs Squadron ordered to patrol MAYFIELD at 15,000 feet. No interceptions. At 2000 hrs Squadron was at 30 minutes available. P/O's WADE and FOKES did a dusk patrol over MAIDSTONE DUNGENESS at 15,000 ft. No enemy aircraft were encountered. S/Ldr. RANKIN did some dusk flying.

01/04/41

Very wet day and low clouds making flying impossible. Some link trainer was carried out.

02/04/41

Another wet day with low cloud. No flying took place. Some cine camera gun instruction was carried out during the day.

03/04/41

Dawn readiness was altered to 0900 hours owing to a ground mist. Brighter today with some sun in the morning. P/O.'s DUKE and BRETTELL reported to 92 this morning, also Sgt. RIPPON from O.T.U. at GRANGEMOUTH. This brings the total of pilots up to 23.

04/04/41

Better today and some flying was done in the afternoon. New formations were done by eleven machines. Dusk landings by P/O. WELLUM.

05/04/41

Not much flying in the morning owing to mist. P/O. MOTTRAM took P/O. BRETTELL up for practice flying in the afternoon. SIR. A. SINCLAIR visited the SQUADRON and was introduced to all the pilots and Officers at dispersal. Weather closed in making flying impossible in the afternoon.

06/04/41

Dull with low cloud. The pilots were released for training and were under instructions in the Station Intelligence during the morning. A little flying over Base in the afternoon, but the cloud remained very low all day.

07/04/41

Dull again, clouds at about 2,000 feet. The COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. WRIGHT took two Spitfires to HUCKNALL and returned with two others which had been modified. Some practice flying took place during the day but pilots had to keep low and near the base on account of cloud.

08/04/41

Dull with cloud at 1000 feet. Instruction lectures on ZZ landings and some flying.

09/04/41

Several patrols were carried out today. No enemy aircraft were encountered. Three DUTCH pilots are being posted to this Squadron according to a signal received from 11 Group.

10/04/41

Bright and clear. Squadron at readiness at 0830 hours this morning. Quite a lot of flying was done today. One flight went off with 609 Squadron in the afternoon and patrolled over a Convoy in the Channel.

11/04/41

Bright and clear today. 92 Squadron at DAWN Readiness at 0500 hours. Our night fighters shot down 15 enemy bombers over ENGLAND last night. At about noon today four aircraft of 92 Squadron were ordered to sink a seaplane which was being towed back to FRANOR by an enemy ship. The four to go were The C.O., F/Lt. KINGCOME, Sgt. LLOYD and Sgt. GASKELL. The enemy seaplane was shot up and sunk and the tow ship damaged. During this operation 15 Me. 109's attacked and shot down Sgt. GASKELL into the sea and he is now missing. He is a great loss to the Squadron and was a very promising pilot. The C.O. returned and left for DEBDEN by plane.

12/04/41

Dull today with low cloud. No flying this morning. The C.O. returned during the morning. Some practice flying during the afternoon. Sgt. REAM and Sgt. RIPPON were posted to No. 56 Squadron.

13/04/41

Dull with low cloud. Six machines took off for co-operation with the NAVY. They were up an hour. No further flying all day. Some LINK TRAINER practice carried out.

14/04/41

DAWN Readiness at 0500 hours. Low cloud prevented much flying all day. Some practice flying over BASE. The Squadron was released unconditionally after 1300 hours. The three new DUTCH Pilots reported for duty.

15/04/41

Bright and clear today. Squadron again on DAWN Readiness. Several practice flights but no operational patrols.

16/04/41

Bright and clear. An operational sweep was carried out during the morning. No enemy aircraft were seen. A second sweep was done over the FRENCH coast in the afternoon without contacting enemy aircraft. Two pilots did Dusk landings.

17/04/41

Bright again. An operational patrol was carried out during the morning but nothing was seen. Squadron was released in the afternoon. P/O. BRETTELL was posted to 56 Squadron at NORTH WEALD but this was cancelled later in the day. Four machines went to WEST MALLING for night READINESS at 1800 hrs.

18/04/41

Bright in the morning but it clouded over in the afternoon. One practice patrol with the NAVY was carried out today. The C.O. attended a Conference at GROUP today.

19/04/41

Rain and low clouds. No flying until the evening. Two aircraft went to GRAVESEND together with CREWS for NIGHT READINESS.

20/04/41

Bright and clear today. One convoy patrol took place at 1300 hours. Nine machines took part in this but no enemy aircraft were seen. Some practice flying was done in the afternoon as the Squadron was released for training.

21/04/41

Bright with occasional clouds. 3 Aircraft patrolled in the afternoon and three went to GRAVESEND for NIGHT READINESS. Other practice flying took place during the day.

22/04/41

Bright with ground mist. A section of three aircraft did a CONVOY patrol off MANSTON at 0730 hours. Another section did a MAIDSTONE patrol at 1230 hours. Some practice flying during the afternoon.

23/04/41

Dull with low cloud. 92 today scores a victory. S/Ldr. RANKIN and F/Lt. BRUINIER intercepted a Me 109 over the South Coast this morning. S/Ldr. RANKIN attacked and set the 109 on fire after which F/Lt. BRUINIER fired at it. It crashed in flames and the Pilot baled out and is now a prisoner. Our score is now 133 confirmed. The Squadron released for training this afternoon.

24/04/41

(Details of Work indicate that the above victory took place on this day)

25/04/41

Bright with high wind. The Squadron was released for training till 1300 hours when it came to readiness. P/O. FOKES posted to No. 53 O.T.U. The C.O. went to DOVER on a Court of Inquiry today. Three aircraft went to GRAVESEND for night readiness.

26/04/41

Bright and clear with high wind. The Squadron came to readiness at DAWN 0444 hours. Two aircraft went off on CONVOY patrol at 0700 hours. Seven aircraft went on patrol at 1300 hours and encountered 4 Me 109's over the FRENCH coast. P/O. FOKES shot one down into the sea and P/O. MAITLAND-THOMPSON and P/O. DUKE shot at another but the result was not observed. The Squadron was released for training at 1400 hours.

27/04/41

Dull and wet. No flying all morning. Readiness at 0900 hours. The COMMANDING OFFICER and P/O. WELLUM went off about 1000 hours to intercept a raid. They were in the air nearly two hours, but did not see any enemy aircraft. The Squadron was released for training at 1300 hours. In the evening four aircraft were sent on patrol and encountered six 109's over the coast. No combat took place and all our aircraft returned safely.

28/04/41

Dull but fine. Readiness at DAWN. Some flying was done but nothing operational during the morning. Some cannon firing practice at LEYSDOWN during the afternoon. Squadron patrolled MAIDSTONE at 20,000 feet for an hour in the evening. No enemy aircraft seen.

29/04/41

Bright but low cloud in places. Dawn readiness till 1300 hours. Some air firing in the sea. Squadron on readiness at 1630 hours. We heard with regret that P/O. Pennings, the DUTCH pilot who left 92 for 611 Squadron, was reported missing yesterday.

30/04/41

Bright and clear. No flying during the morning. Readiness at 1300 hours. Six aircraft on MAIDSTONE patrol. Squadron released at 1630 hours. No night readiness.

01/05/41

Dull and wet. No flying all morning. Squadron comes to Readiness at 1600 hours. No flying possible owing to low clouds.

02/05/41

Dull and wet. No flying again all morning. Some practice flying and air firing with cannons into the sea during the afternoon. Squadron released at 1630 hours Squadron Leader R.R.S. TUCK late of 92 Squadron visited us today.

03/05/41

Bright with clouds. One patrol this morning in which F/O. MOTTRAM fired at a 109, this has not been confirmed, but may be a probable. Released at 1300 hours. Some practice flying in the afternoon. COMMANDING OFFICER went on 7 days leave.

04/05/41

Bright with ground mist. Section patrol over base at 0715 hours. 'SPHERE' at 1333 hours by four aircraft. 'B' Flight MAIDSTONE patrol in the afternoon.

05/05/41

Bright and clear. Section patrol base at 1249 hours. Some cannon firing during the day. Dusk landings were carried out by 2/Lt. X. De MONTBRON and Sgt. BOWEN-MORRIS.

06/05/41

Bright with ground mist. P/O. WADE went to HALTON for a medical board today. Sgt. WALDERN reported on posting. Squadron on 60 minutes available for Night Flying.

07/05/41

Bright and clear. Squadron on 60 minutes available owing to Night Flying. Twelve aircraft went to WEST MALLING at 2000 hours, but did not have to take off all night. P/O. ARCHER and P/O. DOUGAL reported on posting.

08/05/41

Bright and clear. Squadron again on 60 minutes available all day. Squadron took off for WEST MALLING at 2000 hours. Some Night Flying was done over base.

09/05/41

Beautiful day with clear sky. Squadron returned to BIGGIN HILL and was on readiness from 0930 hours till 1300 hours. Several operational patrols took place during the day. One patrol during the evening was attacked by 109's and F/O. WADE and P/O. MAITLAND-THOMPSON were shot up. F/O. WADE landed safely but P/O. MAITLAND-THOMPSON crash landed receiving slight injuries to his leg and face. The machine was a complete write off. On this patrol Sgt. BOWEN-MORRIS shot down a Me 109 and another 109 crashed owing to evasive action taken by F/O. WADE, causing the controls of the 109 to break.

10/05/41

Bright with a few clouds. Readiness at 0900 hours. Several operational patrols and contact was made with 109's. Several pilots fired their guns but no results were observed. No Night Flying.

11/05/41

Bright and clear. The usual patrols were made but no enemy aircraft were seen. Readiness at 0900 hours and later in the evening. No Night Flying. F/Lt. WRIGHT DFC. was on all night readiness but was not sent up.

12/05/41

Bright and clear. Readiness at Dawn to 0900 hours. No operational flying all day. Some local flying and engine tests. The weather became U.S. owing to mist. The COMMANDING OFFICER returned from leave.

13/05/41

Dull with clouds. Several patrols today but no enemy activity encountered. Night flying practice. P/O. BRETTELL made a bad landing and slightly damaged his aircraft.

15/05/41

Bright and clear, no operational flying till the afternoon except two aircraft on a convoy patrol. In the evening ten aircraft were ordered on patrol. They encountered some 109's and Sgt. WALDERN fired at one, but the result was unobserved. He

returned with some bullet holes in his machine. Dusk patrol by F/Lt. WRIGHT DFC. and Sgt. Le CHEMINANT, but this had to return on account of bad weather.

16/05/41

Bright and clear. Squadron was on readiness till 1300 hours today. Squadron was sent off at 1145 hours on a sweep with 74 and 609 Squadrons. WING COMMANDER MALAN DSO. DFC leading. Several enemy aircraft were seen and Sgt. KINGABY and F/Lt. WRIGHT. DFC. scored a probable over the CHANNEL. The squadron landed at 1400 hours. On a later patrol two 109's were shot down; one by Sgt. KINGABY DFM., and the other by several of the Pilots. Our Score today is two 109's shot down and one probable. The AIR OFFICER COMMANDING visited the Squadron in the afternoon.

17/05/41

Bright and clear. Squadron was on readiness at Dawn when several patrols(convoy) were carried out till 0900 hours. Squadron on 30 minutes till 1630 hours . Another patrol in the evening when several enemy aircraft were seen but were not engaged.

18/05/41

Bright and clear. Only one patrol today at 1714 hours in the evening. No enemy aircraft were seen. Some practice flying during the day. Much warmer weather. Squadron on readiness till dusk which is 2300 hours.

19/05/41

Bright and warm. Squadron at Readiness today at 1300 hours. Two patrols were carried out over MAIDSTONE under cloud during the day. No enemy aircraft were seen.

20/05/41

Dull and cool. Squadron on readiness at Dawn till 0900 hours. Weather prevented flying all day. Heavy ground mist. Squadron did not return to readiness.

21/05/41

Bright and clear. Readiness at Dawn. A section was on patrol of convoy this morning and was relieved by other sections. Blenheim escort of three aircraft was provided at 1200 hours today. Squadron at 15 minutes this afternoon. 92 did a cover in a circus over FRANCE taking off at approximately 1700 hours. Eleven aircraft took off, but three had to return. The other eight aircraft were up on this circus for over an hour. They did not engage the enemy, and all landed safely at BIGGIN HILL.

22/05/41

Squadron at Readiness 0930 hours till 1300 hours. No operational flying all morning. The weather remains good with some light cloud. Only test and practice flying during the rest of the day.

23/05/41

High wind with light rain. Dawn readiness. No flying owing to bad weather conditions. Squadron was released at 1300 hours for the rest of the day.

24/05/41

Bright with low cloud. Several convoy patrols were carried out during the morning. Squadron on readiness at 1300 hours. No further activity during the day owing to bad weather.

25/05/41

Dull with low cloud. Squadron on readiness at 1300 hours. During the morning six aircraft took off and went over FRANCE on a 'R' Patrol. All landed safely later. In the afternoon 9 aircraft did a 'cover' near RAMSGATE with 91 Squadron. W/CMDR. MALAN DSO, DFC, and S/Ldr. RANKIN did an operational flight together. Weather got very bad towards evening. Heavy rain and wind.

26/05/41

Dull with rain and low cloud. One flight at readiness at dawn. Weather remained too bad for flying all day.

27/05/41

Dull with cloud. Squadron on readiness at 0900 hours till 1300 hours. One section escorted a BLENHEIM during the morning. Readiness again at 1930 hours. Two sections patrolled for a short time till dusk.

28/05/41

Bright and clear today. Readiness today at 1300 hours. The squadron did a patrol over FRANCE in the evening, with 609 squadron, and on the way back they encountered several 109's. A combat took place and P/O. WADE has his machine shot up in several places, but landed safely at BIGGIN HILL. No enemy aircraft were seen to be hit and we suffered no loss.

29/05/41

Dull with low cloud. One section on readiness at Dawn.

30/05/41

Dull with low cloud and rain. Squadron released off station at 1300 hours.

31/05/41

Another very dull day with ground mist. Squadron released at 1300 hours.

01/06/41

Dull with low cloud. Only one operational patrol this evening of one section, this had to be abandoned owing to the weather after half an hour. Two new pilots posted to 92.

02/06/41

Very little flying all day owing to the bad weather conditions. A section did a patrol in the evening. No enemy aircraft were seen.

03/06/41

Dull with low cloud. Squadron at readiness at 0900 hours. Sgt. TERRY is to return to 92 after two months of ferry work at HENDON. No flying on account of bad weather.

04/06/41

Thick fog till nearly noon, then it cleared and became very hot for the rest of the day. Squadron on readiness at 1300 hrs. One escort for bombers was provided during the afternoon. Nothing occurred and no enemy action was reported. A patrol during the dusk period. No action during this patrol. Sgt. PIETRASIAK a POLE reported for duty with 92.

05/06/41

One section at dawn readiness. Very thick weather no flying possible all morning. Squadron released for the rest of the day at 1300 hrs on account of the weather.

06/06/41

Dull with mist. Dawn readiness was cancelled owing to weather conditions. Squadron was released from 1300 hours for the rest of the day. SQUADRON LEADER RANKIN is on two days sick leave. S/Ldr. WARD visited 92 and brought a copy of his history of the squadron.

07/06/41

Dull but looks like clearing. Squadron on 30 minutes till 1300 hours when they came to readiness. S/Ldr. RANKIN returns today.

Squadron was called to readiness at 1130 and at 1145 they took off lead by W/C MALAN to do a sweep over the FRENCH COAST. They all landed in about an hour and a quarter. During this sweep no enemy aircraft were seen or engaged.

08/06/41

Dull with rain. No operational flying took place all day owing to bad weather. S/Ldr. RANKIN and F/O. MOTTRAM went over to MIDDLE WALLOP this afternoon to do some tests in air to ground (Tank) firing tomorrow. No other flying all day except for a few test flights over the base.

09/06/41

Very heavy rain this morning with low cloud. Readiness at 0900 till 1300 after which the squadron is released for fighter nights for the rest of the day. If weather permits the squadron will fly to WEST MALLING for night readiness during the evening. The weather during the evening was so bad the fighter nights was cancelled.

10/06/41

Dull with heavy rain all day. No flying possible. The squadron was released all day and the fighter nights had to be cancelled owing to adverse weather conditions. The C.O., and F/O. MOTTRAM are weather bound at MIDDLE WALLOP. MR HUGH GIBSON, USA, called at BIGGIN HILL today and was introduced to the pilots of 92 at the dispersal hut. He was accompanied by GROUP CAPTAIN. SIR LOUIS L. GREIG.

11/06/41

Dull with cloud. Squadron released all day again for fighter nights at WEST MALLING. Seventeen pilots took off during the evening for WEST MALLING. The weather had cleared considerably during the day. Some practice flying was done during the night at WEST MALLING.

12/06/41

The squadron arrived back before breakfast and does not go on readiness till 1630 this afternoon. During the afternoon the squadron was sent to escort some bombers to the FRENCH COAST. During this operation several 109's were attacked and the C.O. shot one down into the sea in a head on attack. He received three machine gun bullets in his own wing in this combat but was unhurt himself. All the aircraft landed by 1630 hours.

13/06/41

Bright and cool. Squadron at Readiness at dawn. Sections were sent up during the early morning on patrol. No enemy aircraft were seen. Readiness again at 1300 hours. Readiness again at 1930 hours. No further operational flying during the day.

14/06/41

Dull with cloud. 13 Aircraft took off at 0630 hours on a sweep over FRANCE. Quite a fair amount of activity. The C.O. shot at a 109 which went down vertically into the mist near the ground. F/Lt. WRIGHT DFC. And Sgt. PAYNE were shot up and crashed landed at LYMPNE and HAWKINGE respectively. F/Lt. KINGCOME DFC.

and SOUS/LIEUT. De MONTBRON's machines were slightly damaged, all the rest landed okay. The Squadron on readiness at 1300 hours again. No further operational flying during the day.

15/06/41

Dull with cloud. 'A' Flight at dawn readiness. Squadron does not go to Readiness till 1930. SUTTON BRIDGE range is reserved for 92 this afternoon. About 200 boys of the AIR TRAINING CORPS came out to 92 dispersal and were shown over Spitfires by the pilots. Six aircraft were at SUTTON BRIDGE range till 2100 hours.

16/06/41

Bright and clear today. Squadron at readiness at 0900 hours. No operational flying was done during the morning, but an escort for bombers was sent up in the afternoon. Seven machines took off. Several enemy aircraft were encountered over the sea and the Squadron scored a total of 2 destroyed and two probables. F/O. WADE and Sgt. BOWEN-MORRIS destroyed two 109's and the C.O. and F/Lt. KINGCOME DFC. got the other two. F/Lt. KINGCOME DFC. machine was badly shot up but he was able to get back and land at BIGGIN HILL.

17/06/41

Squadron at readiness at dawn. Convoy patrols were made by two machines at a time during the early morning. No further operational flying was done until the evening when the Squadron escorted bombers over FRANCE. Many 109's were encountered and Sgt. PAYNE shot down 2 109's. F/Lt. WRIGHT DFC., scored a

probable. This operation was one of the largest yet carried out over FRANCE. Another patrol was carried out by the squadron at 2300 hours. Nothing was encountered all the Squadron returned to base after dusk.

18/06/41

Squadron did not come to readiness until 1300 hours. A lecture was given at 609 dispersal to all pilots during the morning. The C.O. went to NORTHOLT for a conference with the C.O. of 609. Another escort was provided in the evening by 92 and one 109 was shot down by the C.O. and P.O. BRETTELL during an encounter over the CHANNEL.

19/06/41

Beautiful day with clear sky. Some patrols were carried out during the day. A convoy patrol by the Squadron was carried out during the evening. No enemy aircraft were encountered on this. F/O.SAUNDERS was posted to 74 Squadron today and F/O. MOTTRAM left to join 54 squadron to which he is posted.

20/06/41

Bright with some ground mist. One flight on readiness at dawn. 30 minutes till 1300 then the squadron is released off camp for the rest of the day. No further flying took place.

21/06/41

The squadron is not due to come to readiness till 1300 hrs but at 1100 hrs it was called to readiness to go on an escort to bombers.

It took off with 609 at 1200 hrs and returned about 1330 hrs. The C.O. shot down a 109 making his Fifth enemy machine shot down. He was the only one of the Squadron to be in combat and all the others landed without firing their guns. Another bomber escort was provided in the afternoon and several combats took place. The C.O. and P/O. WADE shot a 109 down between them and Sgt. ASTON was shot down and landed into the sea. He was able to inflate his rubber dinghy and was picked up safe. He returned to camp later from DOVER. The day's bag for the RAF was 28 Huns to a loss of 5 of ours; two pilots being safe. It was ascertained that Sgt. ASTON shot down a 109 before he was shot down himself. Sgt. HAVERCROFT claimed a damaged 109.

22/06/41

Squadron at readiness at 0900 hours. Squadron ordered to patrol MAIDSTONE at 1020 hours at 20,000 feet. Sgt. LLOYD had to return owing to oxygen trouble. At 1500 hours Squadron took off on escort. Sgt. PAYNE shot down a 109. 8 aircraft landed base at 1700 hrs. P/O.'S BRETTELL and WADE landed at MANSTON. Squadron to readiness at 1855 hours.

23/06/41

Bright and clear. 1 section ordered to patrol convoy at 0859. No enemy aircraft were seen or engaged. Escort patrol at 1248. Enemy aircraft were encountered, and the squadron gave a good account of itself. The C.O. destroyed 2 109's. Sgt. KINGABY DFM. and P/O. ARCHER a 109 each. P/O. DUKE claims one damaged. Sgt. BOWEN-MORRIS is reported missing from this operation but

it is hoped that he is a Prisoner Of War as a pilot was seen floating in the water near the FRENCH COAST. Another escort patrol was carried out at 1942 hrs and during this W.C. MALAN shot down a 109 and P/O. DOUGALL claims a 109. F/O. WADE and Sgt. Le CHEMINANT claim one probable each. It has been a good day for the squadron today.

24/06/41

Readiness at dawn. Some air firing with cannon carried out this morning. Escort patrol at 1951 hrs. W/C. MALAN got a 109 and Sgt. PAYNE got 2 109's. No further operational flying today. Squadron today reached it's 150th enemy aircraft destroyed.

25/06/41

Squadron at readiness at 0910. 2 aircraft to patrol convoy. Escort patrol at 1146 hrs. Some enemy activity was encountered and W/C MALAN got a 109 together with F/Lt. WRIGHT and P/O. DUKE who got one each. Another escort patrol at 1545 hrs. Sgt. PAYNE got a 109. Sgt. PIETRASIAK coming back from air firing crashed on landing but was unhurt. No further activity.

26/06/41

Squadron to readiness at 0933 hrs. Escort patrol at 1046 hrs. No enemy aircraft were encountered, but Sgt. ASTON is reported missing. Squadron released unconditionally for the rest of the day.

27/06/41

Readiness at dawn. 1 Section to patrol convoy north of SHEERNESS. Escort patrol at 1420 with 609 to attack shipping. No engagements took place. Some air firing took place. Another escort patrol at 2045 but no enemy aircraft were encountered.

28/06/41

Escort patrol at 0750 hours, no combats took place. All aircraft landed safely. Air firing in the afternoon. Escort patrol at 1638 hours to attack shipping. No enemy aircraft seen or encountered.

29/06/41

Squadron released all day. Today the squadron received a telegram from Archibald Sinclair congratulating 92 on its good work during the past fortnight. F/Lt. WRIGHT DFC has been awarded a BAR to his DFC and F/O. WADE awarded the DFC.

30/06/41

Readiness at 0900 hours. Three new Sgt. Pilots were posted to 92 today. They are Sgts. TODD, CARPENTER and WAWNS who is an AUSTRALIAN. Escort patrol at 1730 hrs but no action was reported. The C.O. awarded his DFC today.

01/07/41

Squadron at dawn readiness. Several patrols by sections took place before 0900. Four machines had to land at NORTHOLT owing to weather conditions at BIGGIN HILL. A sweep took place over

FRANCE at 1630 hours. All returned safely without contacting any enemy aircraft. Weather hot and clear.

02/07/41

Squadron called to readiness at 1100 hours and eleven machines took off at 1200 hours for a bomber escort to LILLE. They all returned gradually to BIGGIN HILL some had landed at MANSTON and WEST MALLING in the meantime. Several combats took place over FRANCE and we obtained the following score. Sgt. KINGABY DFM. two 109F's destroyed. Sgt. LLOYD shot a 109F down into the sea also Sgt. PIETRASIAK. The score for the Squadron is now 165 Confirmed with a total of 307 altogether. Another sweep was carried out during the late afternoon, but no combats took place. All the aircraft were back by 1800 hours.

03/07/41

Beautiful day with clear sky. A large bomber escort was carried out this morning. 16 Squadrons taking part. Few enemy aircraft were encountered and all '92' landed safely. Sgt. KINGABY. DFM. claimed a probable. Another bomber escort was carried out at 1500 hours. Several combats took place and Lieut. X. De MONTBRON, failed to return. We did not shoot down any enemy aircraft on this occasion.

04/07/41

Bright and clear. Dawn readiness. An escort to bombers was carried out at 1200 hours today, this was very successful and 16 enemy aircraft were shot down to a loss of 4 of ours. '92' landed

safely at about 1530 hours, all returning safely. Our POLISH pilot, Sgt. PIETRASIAK shot down a 109 and shared one with WING COMMANDER MALAN. No further activity after this during the evening.

05/07/41

Bright and clear. Squadron on readiness at 1300 hours today. Another bomber escort was carried out today at 1200 hours. No combats took place and all our aircraft landed safely. The squadron was released off the camp for the rest of the day.

06/07/41

Another beautiful day. The AIR OFFICER COMMANDING arrived during the morning and congratulated '92' on its splendid record in the last four weeks. At 1330 hours another bomber escort was carried out and all our machines returned with the exception of Sgt. TODD. He is reported missing and was last seen leaving the formation at the FRENCH COAST as if to return to ENGLAND. The squadron did not go up again after this operation.

07/07/41

Weather bright and hot. Two more escort sweeps were made today. When the squadron landed at 1600 hours the PRIME MINISTER was at our dispersal and spoke to the Pilots. They all returned except Sgt. HOWARD who crash landed somewhere near DYMCHURCH. He was slightly hurt and is now in hospital. P/O. ARCHER shot down a 109 and damaged another.

08/07/41

Beautiful day and very hot. An early escort was carried out shortly after dawn. All the pilots returned except P/O. BEAKE who baled out over the sea near the FRENCH COAST. The COMMANDING OFFICER scored a probable and F/O. WELLUM shot down a 109 as well as Sgt. PIETRASIAK. P/O. BEAKE was picked up and got back to camp in the afternoon. Another escort was carried out at 1300 hours. All the pilots arrived back without having been in combat. Squadron released for the rest of the day.

09/07/41

Good weather with high temperature. Squadron at readiness at dawn. F/O. LUND and P/O. MAITLAND-THOMPSON returned fit from medical boards today. An escort sweep took place at 1300 hours today. '92' again did a very good job. The COMMANDING OFFICER shot down a 109 and scored another probable. F/O. WELLUM got one 109 and Sgt. PIETRASIAK shot down two. P/O. ARCHER shot down another, this makes a total score of 5 shot down and one probable. Sgt. WALDERN damaged one also Sgt. WAWN. P/O's ARCHER and BRETTELL landed away, but were alright.

10/07/41

Weather still keeps bright and clear. Another escort was carried out in the afternoon but no combats took place, except Sgt. WALDERN who was shot down and had to bale out into the sea. He was lost for over five hours and returned to camp at 1900 hours.

11/07/41

Beautiful weather again. An escort was carried out in the afternoon and several combats took place. P/O.LUND and Sgt. PIETRASIAK shot down a 109 each, and Sgt. KINGABY DFM. scored two probables. It is very much regretted by all that P/O. Dougall failed to return and was seen shot down and on fire by Sgt. LLOYD.

12/07/41

Weather still very good. Squadron at readiness at 0930 hours. Squadron provided a cover over the FRENCH COAST at 1230 hours. No combats took place and all got back safely. Weather clouded over about 1500 hours and a thunder storm seems to be coming up. Weather remained dull with heavy showers for the rest of the day.

13/07/41

The weather was not good and no operations took place during the day.

14/07/41

Dull with some cloud. A sweep took place during the morning. No combats took place and all returned safely. P/O.'s ARCHER and BEAKE reported back for duty. No further operations took place during the day.

15/07/41

Very wet day with low cloud. Squadron released till 1700 hours when there is a conference in the Intelligence Office. F/Lt.

KINGCOME DFC. and BAR returned from leave today. A conference in connection with a sweep over FRANCE at 1700 hours was cancelled owing to the weather. Squadron released.

16/07/41

Dull and wet again. Squadron on readiness at Dawn. No flying all day owing to low cloud. P/O. Phillips reported for duty as a new posting also P/O. BRUCE. Squadron released for the rest of the day at 1700 hours.

17/07/41

Weather better today. Some cloud. Squadron at readiness at 0900 hours. Two sweeps over the CHANNEL took place during the day. No enemy aircraft were seen and the cloud was bad over FRANCE. Sgt. HOWARD forced landed at WEST MALLING owing to shortage of petrol. P/O. THOMAS also landed at WEST MALLING on his return from the afternoon sweep.

18/07/41

Dull with low clouds. Squadron is not on readiness till 1300 hours. Squadron took off in bad weather and made contact with some 109's. Some shooting took place on both sides but nothing happened. The squadron landed at MANSTON but eventually landed here about 1400 hours. F/O. WELLUM was awarded the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS today. Weather is getting very bad with low cloud and rain. The COMMANDING OFFICER is going on 10 days leave tonight. F/Lt. THOMPSON reported for flying duty with 92.

19/07/41

Better weather today. Bright with some local cloud. Squadron on Readiness at dawn. F/O. LUND to act as F/Lt. in 'B' flight. A conference at 1220 hours and a sweep took off at 1315 hours. Twelve aircraft took off on this sweep. All returned except Sgt. WALDERN a Canadian who is reported missing.

20/07/41

Bright this morning. Some cloud later in the day. A sweep took off at 1130 hours. All returned at 1315 hours without having made contact with the enemy. Nothing again till 2200 hours when 92 was sent off over the CHANNEL on some information about enemy shipping. Nothing was seen and all returned and landed by 2300 hours.

21/07/41

Dull with some cloud. An early sweep and escort for bombers to LILLE took place at 0745 hours. All returned at 0930 hours with the exception of P/O. THOMAS who has not yet reported. No enemy aircraft were seen and no action took place on this sweep. Squadron comes back to readiness at 1300 hours. P/O. THOMAS returned after having landed at MANSTON to re-fuel. Another sweep took place during the evening. No enemy aircraft were seen nor were any of our aircraft engaged.

22/07/41

Dull with cloud and some ground mist. Squadron on Readiness at dawn. A sweep was made at 1130 hours. Nothing happened and no

contact with enemy aircraft was made. All landed with the exception of F/Lt.'s KINGCOME DFC. and LUND who did not go owing to faulty R/T trouble. Nothing further was done during the day.

23/07/41

Squadron on readiness at dawn in view of an early sweep, this did not take place owing to adverse weather conditions over FRANCE. One flight on readiness at 0900 till 1300 hours. A sweep took place at midday and all returned without contacting any enemy aircraft. Another sweep was carried out at 1930 hrs and several enemy aircraft were encountered. Sgt. HICKMAN shot down a 109 in flames. All our pilots returned safely. P/O. DOUGALL is now reported Prisoner of War.

24/07/41

No operational work all morning. Beautiful day with clear sky. Readiness at 1300 hrs. A sweep was carried out at midday and half an hour after landing the squadron was sent off again. F/Lt. THOMPSON shot down a 109 and Sgt. JOHNSTON scored two probables. Sgt. HOWARD also got one probable. Sgt. VINTER was shot down into the sea and was not found when a search was made for him. He is reported missing.

25/07/41

Squadron at readiness at dawn when some convoy escorts were furnished. Weather clouded over and no operations took place

during the day. Squadron released at 1700 hrs for the rest of the day.

26/07/41

Conference at 0500 hrs, cancelled owing to heavy rain and low cloud. Bad weather all day making flying impossible.

27/06/41

Another day of bad weather making operational flying impossible. Sgt. AHERN reported for flying duties.

28/07/41

Dull again with cloud. Squadron on readiness at dawn. A conference at 0900 hrs was cancelled on account of the weather. The COMMANDING OFFICER returned from leave.

29/07/41

Again no flying owing to weather conditions. Rain and low cloud most of the day.

30/07/41

Bright this morning, but clouded over later. No operations up to noon. Squadron at readiness at 1500 hours. Nothing further to report.

31/07/41

Dull with low cloud. Squadron released for the rest of the day.

01/08/41

Dull with low clouds. No flying possible all day. Squadron released off camp.

02/08/41

Dull again making flying impossible. Squadron released off camp again.

03/08/41

Brighter today. Some activity during the evening. At 1730 hours four aircraft did a Rhubarb over FRANCE. Two had to return on account of cloud at 1800 hours. 8 aircraft took off on an escort for an attack on shipping. All returned. Another four aircraft left at 2119 hours on a Rhubarb. All returned except P/O. BRUCE who forced landed at LYMPNE, with a damaged tail plane owing to A.A. Fire over FRANCE.

04/08/41

Clear, not much activity during the day. One or two patrols were made but no enemy aircraft were seen. Weather continues to be cloudy and unsatisfactory for operational flying.

05/08/41

No flying all day. One sweep carried out in the evening without any result owing to bad weather conditions over FRANCE. Sgts. COX and HANN reported from an OTU for flying duties.

06/08/41

Low clouds with occasional bright periods. A conference at 1000 hours, but no operations ordered owing to adverse weather over FRANCE. The squadron went on a sweep about 1900 hrs over FRANCE. The weather became so bad that they returned without reaching the target.

07/08/41

Bright with a clear sky. A conference called for at 0900 hours in view of a sweep at 1000 hrs. This was postponed owing to weather till later in the afternoon. A high escort was made by 92 and several combats took place. Sgt. KINGABY DFM. scored one probable and one damaged. The squadron did not go to WEST MALLING for fighter nights owing to bad weather. A further sweep was made in the evening and the COMMANDING OFFICER scored one confirmed and one damaged. Sgt. HOWARD. RNZAF. was reported missing from this operation. Sgts. AHERN and HICKMAN crashed landed near DEAL. Sgt. AHERN is alright but Sgt. HICKMAN is slightly injured in hospital at DEAL.

08/08/41

Dull with heavy rain. Squadron on 30 minutes all morning. F/Lt. MILNE DFC. reported for duty. No flying all day on account of bad weather.

09/08/41

Dull again today. A sweep was carried out in the evening and several combats took place. The COMMANDING OFFICER shot

down two confirmed. Sgt. Le CHEMINANT got one confirmed. Sgt. KINGABY DFM. got one confirmed and one probable. The rest of the Squadron scored one probable and three damaged. Sgt. HARRISON was shot up and landed at HAWKINGE.

10/08/41

Bright this morning. The Squadron did a fighter sweep at noon but did not encounter any enemy aircraft. All landed safely and no further operations took place during the day, as the weather became dull with heavy rain.

11/08/41

Dull with heavy rain all day. Squadron released all day till 1700 hours. Further release owing to weather conditions.

12/08/41

Bright with some cloud. Conference at 1015 hours and a sweep at 1100 hours. No enemy aircraft were encountered and all landed safely. Another sweep took off about 1730 hours and the only one to get shot up was Sgt. CARPENTER. He was unhurt but his machine was damaged, all the rest landed safely.

13/08/41

Dull with heavy rain. Squadron released till 1300 hours. Squadron released off camp for the rest of the day owing to bad weather and rain.

14/08/41

Bad weather all morning. Squadron did two sweeps later one at 1344 hours. and one at 1643 hrs. No enemy aircraft were seen during either of these sweeps and all returned safely.

15/08/41

Very wet day with low cloud. No flying possible all day. The East India Fund presented 24 beer tankards to 92 today. The presentation was made by SIR ALFRED PICKFORD at 92 dispersal at 1500 hours. F/O. SANDERSON reported for duty today.

16/08/41

An early sweep was carried out at 0730 hours. Some enemy aircraft were seen and F/Lt. THOMPSON scored a damaged. All landed safely. Two more sweeps during the day, one at 1230 hrs and the other at 1730. No enemy aircraft encountered and all returned to base without damage. One or two pilots fired their guns but without visible result.

17/08/41

Squadron on dawn readiness. Bright with clouds, but weather seems to be deteriorating. Weather remained bad all day and the squadron was released off camp.

18/08/41

Dull with some cloud. Conference at 1330 hrs today. Two sweeps one in the afternoon over LILLE. Sgt. HANN failed to return and is

reported missing. Another sweep in the evening no enemy aircraft encountered and the whole squadron returned safely.

19/08/41

Beautiful day with clear sky. Conference at 1030 hrs this morning. Sweep this morning, no enemy aircraft encountered. All the squadron returned safely at Noon. 'B' Flight on readiness all afternoon. Another sweep in the evening, all returned safely to base. SQUADRON LEADER RANKIN was awarded a BAR to the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS and P/O. DOUGALL now a prisoner of War received A DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS.

20/08/41

Better weather today in the morning but it got bad in the afternoon and all operational flying was called off. Squadron was released early in the afternoon.

21/08/41

Bright and clear. Sweep took off at Noon and an accident occurred on the aerodrome. Sgt. HARRISON hit the wing of a 72 machine taking off and was badly injured. He died in ORPINGTON HOSPITAL the same evening. A second sweep was made in the evening. Sgt. AHERN was reported missing and P/O.ARCHER received a small wound in the leg. P/O.BRETTELL crash landed owing to lack of fuel.

22/08/41

Weather unsatisfactory all day. Squadron released at Noon. No operational flying owing to low cloud. Sgt. ROFF reported for duty.

23/08/41

Dull and wet. No flying possible all morning. The weather continued bad all day. Sgt. POSTLETHWAITE reported for duty.

24/08/41

Dull with rain, till the evening when a sweep took off, but returned without seeing any E/A. P/O. WITAMORE and Sgt. ATKINS reported for duty.

25/08/41

Dull and wet. Cleared during the afternoon. Funeral of Sgt. HARRISON at ORPINGTON. No flying done all day.

26/08/41

Dull during the morning, but it cleared by the afternoon. The squadron took off at 1700 hrs on a sweep. No action was experienced, but P/O. PHILLIPS failed to return.

27/08/41

An early sweep on a bright clear morning. Sgt. ROFF was seen to go into the sea. All returned without contacting enemy aircraft. Another take off at 1030 of 8 aircraft, nothing seen all returned safely. No more flying all day.

28/08/41

Bright with some cloud. Squadron not on readiness till 1700 hrs. Three Canadian pilots reported for flying duties today. P/O. ASSELIN, Sgt. KENWOOD, Sgt. PAVELY. Some local flying during the day. Weather deteriorated during the day. P/O's COCKER and BARTHOLOMEW reported for flying duties.

29/08/41

Dawn readiness with an early sweep. No encounters and all returned safely. Readiness again at 1300 hrs. No further operational flying during the day.

30/08/41

Low clouds. No operational sweep all day. One or two aircraft did convoy escort. Sgt.'s EDGE and WOOD-SCAWEN reported for duty. The BIGGIN HILL wing flew over LONDON this afternoon for demonstration purposes.

31/08/41

An early sweep. All returned by 0800 hours. No encounters. Another sweep conference at 1100 hours, take off at Noon, several encounters took place and the following score was obtained: The COMMANDING OFFICER 1 probable, P/O. BARTHOLOMEW 1 Destroyed, P/O's HUMPHREYS and DUKE 1 damaged each. A convoy patrol was made in the evening and Sgt. KENWOOD RCAF lost his way and baled out, he was uninjured, but his aircraft burnt out.

01/09/41

Bright and clear in the morning. Several non operational pilots did none training during the day. One or two sections did convoy patrols but no large operation took place. Released at 1700 hours.

02/09/41

Beautiful day with warm sun. Squadron on readiness at 0900 hours. Eight aircraft as escort over the Channel during the morning. 30 minutes at 1300 hours. Conference at 1600 hours. 12 aircraft went on a sweep. No encounters with E/A and all back safely.

03/09/41

Thick ground mist and rise in temperature. Mist cleared during the day. Conference at 1510 hours. Sweep at 1530. Several landed at MANSTON and HAWKINGE. P/O. BRUCE was shot up and landed with glycol leak at MANSTON. All the others landed safely back at BIGGIN HILL. F/Lt. MILNE. DFC. taking over 92 as COMMANDING OFFICER and Squadron Leader RANKIN. DFC. to be Wing Commander at BIGGIN HILL.

04/09/41

Dull with hoary mist. Cleared during the day. Conference at 1400 hours was cancelled, and the squadron did not do a sweep till late afternoon. P/O. ASSELIN failed to return from this operation.

05/09/41

Another day of ground mist and bad weather over FRANCE. No operational flying during the day. Squadron was released during the afternoon.

06/09/41

Heavy mist and cloud all day. Squadron was released again after lunch. No further flying.

07/09/41

COMMANDING OFFICER MILNE DFC

Better weather today. Clear bright morning. Squadron on dawn readiness till 0900 hours. Weather over FRANCE not good enough for operational flying. S/Ldr. MILNE DFC took over command of 92 today.

08/09/41

No operational flying all day owing to ground mist. Squadron released off camp in the afternoon. Anniversary of 92 arriving at BIGGIN HILL. Big party in the mess.

09/09/41

Weather still foggy and no flying possible all day.

10/09/41

Ground mist again this morning. One flight on Readiness at 0900 hours. Squadron was released again for the rest of the day owing to weather over FRANCE.

11/09/41

Better weather today. Some cloud. Several Rhubarb patrols were carried out during the day.

12/09/41

Weather not suitable for flying.

13/09/41

Only practice flying today owing to bad weather. Formation flying over BROMLEY in the afternoon. Night flying, Sgt. ATKINS overshot and went over on a wing tip avoiding a stationary machine. Sgt. POSTLETHWAITE crashed from 2500 feet, no explanation why he got into a dive out of control. He crashed onto a house and was killed.

14/09/41

Very little flying today owing to bad weather and ground mist. Some practice over base.

15/09/41

Bad weather again and only local flying possible all day.

16/09/41

Weather better and a conference to be held at 1600 hours in view of a sweep. Sgt. SAMOUELLE reported to 92 for duty. No operational flying owing to bad weather.

17/09/41

Better weather today. A sweep took place at 1500 hours over FRANCE. Several combats took place. P/O. BRETTELL was shot up and wounded. He landed at HAWKINGE and is now in hospital. P/O. BARTHOLOMEW was shot up and had to bale out in the CHANNEL. It was with the greatest regret that we heard that he had been drowned. Sgt. COX got a confirmed 109F and F/Lt. LUND scored a probable. Orders to move to GRAVESEND on the 24/09/41

18/09/41

Beautiful day. Some ground mist. Weather conditions improved and a sweep took place in the afternoon. No enemy aircraft were seen and all arrived back safely.

19/09/41

Weather dull with low cloud. All operational flying cancelled. Squadron released off camp at 1600 hours.

20/09/41

Dull again with adverse weather reports. Sweep in the afternoon. Sgt. HICKMAN failed to return. All the rest landed safely.

21/09/41

Much ground mist most of the day. When it cleared in the evening the Squadron did a sweep over FRANCE. All got back without contacting any enemy aircraft.

22/09/41

Heavy ground mist making flying impossible. Squadron to move to GRAVESEND on Wednesday 24th. All preparations for the move commenced.

23/09/41

Still no flying on account of bad weather conditions. Transport is being loaded for the move tomorrow. Everything completed by the evening. The COMMANDING OFFICER went on leave at night.

24/09/41

Squadron moved out of BIGGIN HILL at 0900 for GRAVESEND. The move completed as regards the ground staff and equipment by the afternoon, only six pilots could land owing to mist on the ground. The rest of the aircraft and pilots remained at BIGGIN HILL. The Officers are billeted at COBHAM HALL two miles from the camp.

GRAVESEND

25/09/41

Beautiful morning with some ground mist. The squadron is settled in and work has commenced at the new station. All the pilots

arrived by air in the afternoon, the Officers billets are very comfortable indeed. Some practice flying but no operational all day.

26/09/41

Another good day with some cloud. Several Rhubarbs were carried out during the day. Practice flying all afternoon.

27/09/41

Bright and clear today. A sweep took place this afternoon. Several combats took place with the following results. The C.O. scored one probable and 1 damaged. Sgt. JOHNSON also one probable and one damaged and P/O. BEAKE damaged one. Everyone got back safely. Some bullet holes were found in P/O. BEAKE'S machine.

28/09/41

Clear early in the day but clouds came over and rain fell during the rest of the day. No operational flying during the day.

29/09/41

Cloudy and some rain. Squadron was released off camp at 1000 hours. No flying all day.

30/09/41

Bright day, some flying done mostly training and dog fighting. Squadron was released at 1600 hours owing to bad weather.

01/10/41

Bright and clear. Some practice flying during the morning. A sweep went off during the afternoon and all returned safely. F/Sgt. KINGABY DFM. scored one confirmed and one probable.

02/10/41

Another bright warm day. A sweep went off at 1200 hours for BIGGIN HILL. One section returned at 1430 hours to GRAVESEND. No combats had taken place by any of this section. The second section however, met with many enemy aircraft and only one of the four returned. The other three, F/Lt. LUND, Sgt. EDGE and Sgt. PORT were all reported missing. P/O. BRUCE was injured when he crash landed at ASHFORD, KENT. He is now in hospital. A very bad day for 92.

03/10/41

Another clear day. A sweep took off from BIGGIN HILL at 1330 and again 92 went into action over FRANCE. The first section led by the COMMANDING OFFICER returned alright but the second section again ran into superior numbers of 109's and Sgt. COX and Sgt. WOOD-SCAWEN were shot down. Sgt. KINGABY DFM. shot down a 109F, but had to land at MANSTON. This made a total of five pilots lost and seven Spitfires written off in two days. A very bad show.

04/10/41

Dull with rain all day. No operational flying possible. Bad weather continued throughout the day.

05/10/41

Dull and misty. No flying possible. Squadron was released off camp at 1000 hours. Rain fell later in the day.

06/10/41

Much ground mist in the morning but it cleared during the day. Very warm and bright. Squadron released for the rest of the day at 1400 hours. Some practice flying during the afternoon.

07/10/41

No flying all day owing to ground mist.

08/10/41

Some practice flying this afternoon when the mist cleared.

09/10/41

Squadron released off camp all day. Dull and wet all day.

10/10/41

This is the second anniversary of the formation of 92 Squadron. The squadron was formed at TANGMERE on the 10th October, 1939 by SQUADRON LEADER BUSHELL. Only 34 of the original boys of the squadron are now serving with it and a party was given by them in LONDON today. They left GRAVESEND in a coach for LONDON at 1400. They had invited SQUADRON LEADER R. M. MILNE. DFC. the present COMMANDING OFFICER, FLYING OFFICER. H.W. McGOWAN the Adjutant and FLYING OFFICER. T.A. WIESE the Intelligence Officer. The party attended a

performance at Victoria Palace of 'Black Vanities' and afterwards had dinner at Oddeninos'. It was a very successful party and the spirit of the 'Gallant' 92' was revived to its old place in the hearts of all who had served with the grand squadron.

11/10/41

Bright and cold today. There was a good deal of mist to the South so no operations were carried out. A good deal of practice flying was done over base.

12/10/41

Another bright day. A sweep with bombers was carried out this morning. All our boys got back. Sgt. GAUTHIER crash landed owing to engine failure at FRISTON near EASTBOURNE. Squadron released in the afternoon.

13/10/41

Weather good again with clear sky. A sweep went off today escorting bombers to a power station near LILLE. All the boys returned safely. The C.O. accounted for three 109's and damaged a fourth. This is the best single score since 92 became operational and the squadron is very proud indeed of the splendid work of Squadron Leader Milne today. We have now reached the Splendid total of 193 destroyed.

14/10/41

Dull and wet. The COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. SANDERSON went to a conference at BIGGIN HILL today at 09.30 hours. Some practice flying over base.

15/10/41

No operational flying took place owing to adverse weather conditions. Some practice flying during the day.

16/10/41

Dull with a good deal of cloud. A lot of practice flying was carried out all day. The C.O. got orders to leave on a special mission to the MIDDLE EAST tomorrow.

17/10/41

Beautiful day. Squadron Leader MILNE DFC. left at 0900 to everyone's regret. GROUP CAPTAIN BARWELL called on the Squadron during the morning from BIGGIN HILL. Some practice flying done during the day.

18/10/41

Another bright day with some ground mist. Some practice flying during the day. All preparations are being made for the move to DIGBY on Monday.

19/10/41

Beautiful day. Most of the day was spent packing for the move tomorrow.

20/10/41

Another bright clear day. The squadron moved to DIGBY at 0900 hours and the move completed by 1800 hours. Nineteen machines were flown over from GRAVESEND. First impressions of the new station were not good at all. The outgoing Squadron took everything with them and caused the squadron to be U.S. The airmen were badly housed several sleeping on the floor.

DIGBY

21/10/41

Our first day at DIGBY. Practice flying all day. The weather clear and bright. Spares have been collected and the squadron is now able to come to Readiness. Some dusk patrols.

22/10/41

Bright and clear. Further practice flying all day. Some Night Flying. A non-operational station does not suit the pilots of 92.

23/10/41

Another good day. Signal received that S/Ldr. G. A. L. CHEATLE of 266 Squadron is to take temporary command of 92 until the return of S/Ldr. R. M. MILNE DFC. He is to report on the 27th. Some practice flying during the day and three pilots did Night Flying.

24/10/41

Beautiful day with some wind. A sweep took place over the WASH at 1300 hours. Nothing was seen by any of our pilots and after

about an hour they all returned to base. The weather deteriorated in the afternoon and no more flying was done.

25/10/41

Dull with ground mist. No flying. 'A' Flight on readiness at 1300 hours.

26/10/41

Some practice flying. Squadron released at noon. Bright with showers.

27/10/41

Dull with ground mist. Some practice flying during the morning. Squadron 30 minutes at 1300 hours. Adverse weather conditions stopped all flying later in the day. Fighter Nights. No action.

28/10/41

COMMANDING OFFICER CHEATLE

Bright and cold. Some practice flying during the day. S/Ldr. CHEATLE reported for Temporary Command of 92. P/O. ARCHER is to be posted for duty with M.S.F.U. and P/O's DUKE and HUMPHREYS are to go overseas as Flight Commanders. 92 is being broken up and only three of the pilots have been with us more than three months.

29/10/41

Dull with cloud this morning. No flying took place all day. Snow showers in the afternoon and a very cold wind. Squadron was released during the afternoon. SIR PAUL DUKES gave a lecture in the mess in the evening about RUSSIA.

30/10/41

Cold and bright. 30 minutes till 1900 hours.

31/10/41

Dull with heavy rain cleared up later in the morning. Some practice flying carried out.

01/11/41

Showery and cold. Some practice flying during the morning. Squadron released in afternoon.

02/11/41

Bright with some cloud. Some practice flying during the day on fighter nights procedure. F/Sgt. D. E. KINGABY DFM. And BAR received his second bar to his DFM. "Good show Donald". He is now posted to an O.T.U. at GRANGEMOUTH. P/O's HUMPHREYS and DUKE were posted as F/Lts. to the MIDDLE EAST and left tonight. Sgt. PAVELY was posted to MANSTON also. The whole squadron were very sorry indeed to see those grand boys leave 92.

03/11/41

Dull with some cloud. Some convoy patrols and practice flying. Squadron released at 1300 hours.

04/11/41

Dull with rain. Very little flying today.

05/11/41

Dull, some practice flying. Signal from H.Q.F.C. that SQUADRON LEADER MILNE has been awarded a BAR to his DFC. "Good show Dicky". F/Lt. SANDERSON went into hospital for examination.

06/11/41

Dull again. Some firing practice from SUTTON BRIDGE this morning. We were all delighted when WING COMMANDER RANKIN DFC. and BAR came to see his old squadron today.

07/11/41

Bright with some ground mist. Seven Sgt. pilots were interviewed for Commissions today. Some practice flying. No Night Flying.

08/11/41

Bright and frosty. Allan Wright called in to see us today, he is now at Fighter Command. Not much flying. P/O. BEAKE put up for Flight Lieutenant as F/Lt. SANDERSON is in hospital and posted to SHQ, DIGBY.

09/11/41

Dull with mist. F/Lt. RICHARDSON recommended for promotion to Squadron Leader and P/O's ARCHER and BRUCE to be F/Lts. Soon we will have no operational pilots in the Squadron.

10/11/41

Some practice flying. Weather very bad with rain and low cloud. Squadron released at 1300. Lecture on gas in the afternoon.

11/11/41

Bright with some cloud. Weather got very bad later in the day. Sgt. KENNEDY crashed in YORKSHIRE having got lost on a practice flight. He was injured and is in Hospital.

12/11/41

A practice parade this morning. No flying all morning. P/O. ARCHER posted to 412 Squadron at WELLINGORE, as F/Lt.

13/11/41

Very wet day. Parade for inspection at 1130 hours this morning. No flying all day.

14/11/41

Wet day. No flying.

15/11/41

Some practice flying. Sgt. WOOLLEY hit F/Lt. RICHARDSON'S machine over LINCOLN at 2,000 feet and was killed. Sgt. WILSON crashed night landing and is in hospital.

16/11/41

Some practice flying. Bright and cold.

17/11/41

Dull with some rain. Some practice flying.

18/11/41

Bright and mild. Some practice flying. With the greatest regret TONY BRUCE left 92 to be a F/Lt. in 54 Squadron.

19/11/41

Dull with heavy rain. No flying all morning. 411 Squadron left DIGBY for HORNCHURCH today. 609 Squadron arrived here from BIGGIN HILL.

20/11/41

S/Ldr. MILNE DFC & BAR returned to 92 today. Everyone was very pleased to see him back. Dull with rain. No flying all day. F/O. WIESE left 92 for GRAVESEND to be INTELLIGENCE OFFICER there to 72 Squadron , after 18 months service as I.O. with 92.

21/11/41

Brighter today. 609 Pilots have not yet arrived here nor have 411 pilots left owing to weather conditions. P/O.WHITTAMORE and Sgt. TITMUS are going on a RHUBARB this afternoon over HOLLAND. This was cancelled owing to weather conditions. P/O. GIBBS reported for duty as I.O.

22/11/41

Dull with low cloud. No flying all day.

23/11/41

Brighter today. Quite a lot of practice flying during the day.

24/11/41

Mild and reasonably clear. Some practice flying. Squadron Leader CHEATLE left 92 on leave.

25/11/41

Another mild day. Again practice flying took place most of the day.

26/11/41

S/Ldr. MILNE DFC. and BAR went to a medical board at HALTON. Only practice flying today.

27/11/41

News was received that W/CMDR. RANKIN DFC. and BAR has been awarded his DSO. Much satisfaction in 92. No operational flying, some practice flying took place. Clear day.

28/11/41

COMMANDING OFFICER MILNE

Clear and bright. Practice flying all day. S/Ldr. MILNE DFC. and BAR returned to duty from HALTON. A dance was hold by 92 tonight as a welcome to S/Ldr MILNE on his return to the squadron. It was a great show and all ranks had a very good time.

29/11/41

Damp and foggy. No flying possible. Squadron released.

30/11/41

Dull with heavy ground mist. No flying all day.

01/12/41

Cold and misty, some practice flying in the afternoon.

02/12/41

Cold and thick fog. No flying possible all morning. P/O's DUNBAR and GORDON reported for duty from GRANGEMOUTH.

03/12/41

Dull with low cloud. Some base flying in the afternoon.

04/12/41

Flying again impossible owing to bad weather conditions. Rain and mist.

05/12/41

Clearer today. Conference at group today. Convoy patrol in the morning by one section.

06/12/41

Weather completely closed in. No flying at all.

07/12/41

Much brighter today, practice flying this morning. 2 sections on convoy patrol in the late afternoon.

08/12/41

Convoy patrols, two sections only this morning, and three sections were sent to MANBY later in the morning, but returned before lunch without having to do anything. The weather very fine this morning, but deteriorated later in the afternoon.

09/12/41

Practice flying this morning. Released for games in the afternoon. P/O. JOHNSTON was welcomed back to the squadron today.

10/12/41

No flying this morning owing to weather, this improved in the afternoon and some practice flying was done. P/O. SAMOUELLE returned to the squadron today.

11/12/41

Weather improved, squadron has two sections at Readiness; one at fifteen minutes and one at thirty in the morning. Squadron released for practice flying in the afternoon when some air to ground firing was done.

12/12/41

Weather cleared a little today. Readiness this morning and at 60 minutes later. Sgt. GEE reported from 56 Squadron, and P/O.'s DUNBAR and GORDON have volunteered today for the MIDDLE EAST, they are both Canadians and have only recently been posted to us. Sgt. SIEFERT has been detailed as a reserve for the MIDDLE EAST.

13/12/41 to 16/12/41

Not in the Record but practice flying took place.

17/12/41

Readiness in the morning, weather still fine, released for games in the afternoon. P/O's DUNBAR and GORDON leaving today for the EAST.

18/12/41

Squadron duty wing today, were brought to Readiness for a sweep, which was however cancelled. The weather is fine but hazy. Sgt. PAYNE RCAF, Sgt. WATSON RAAF, and Sgt. THOMPSON RAAF. arrived from 59 OTU today. Sgt's FISH and PALMER have been detailed to C.F.S. DALCROSS.

19/12/41

Weather closed in, no flying possible. The C.O. returned to us today.

20/12/41

Weather unfit for flying, squadron released for games this afternoon.

21/12/41

Squadron at 60 minutes all the morning. 'B' Flight did some local formation flying. Weather cleared a little in the afternoon, remained at 30 minutes.

22/12/41

Weather hazy this morning, but cleared later. Squadron at readiness from 1300 hours. A scramble took place at 1500 hours which turned out to be a coastal command aircraft. Sgt. AHRENS was posted to 59 OTU. P/O. COCKER has been made Flight Commander of 'A' Flight, this is a popular choice and we are all very glad in having a Flight Commander we know.

23/12/41

Convoy patrol in the morning, released for games in the afternoon. Weather improving.

24/12/41

Nothing to report, weather too bad for flying.

25/12/41

Squadron were brought to Readiness at 1300 hours.

26/12/41

Sections on convoy patrol this morning. Three sections were sent to MANBY, but were released later in the day. Transport sent to fetch Pilots from MANBY.

27/12/41

The squadron was withdrawn from the line at 1300 hours today.

28/12/41

Nothing to report.

29/12/41

A lot of speculation as to where we are going is the main topic these days.

30/12/41

Nothing to report.

31/12/41

Nothing to report.

Flying took place in the previous month as per the Details of Work but there is no record in the Summary.

The Summary resumes at this point.

L.G 173

01/09/42

COMMANDING OFFICER WEDGWOOD

The battle is now on, and the air is full of aircraft. The Squadron went out on sorties today, and P/O. CHISHOLM got one confirmed, and ten were damaged by various other pilots. P/O. BRADLEY SMITH had to bale out, and his aircraft was a 'write-off', and the Commanding Officer's aircraft and Lt. SINCLAIR'S, attached from No. 1. S.A.A.F., were both damaged. P/O. SMITH was taken to No. 14 C.C.S. and from there to hospital. Early this morning, at about 0400 hours the camp was very heavily blitzed. Incendiaries and flares lit the place up like daylight, and anti-personnel bombs were scattered right through the camp from the landing ground to the hills. Several failed to go off. Unfortunately CORPORAL CUSTARD and L.A.C. BRETTER were both severely injured by an A.P. bomb, and another airman was slightly injured. The protection afforded by the slit trenches is very good. Squadron total of confirmed destroyed now 210½.

02/09/42

The air warfare in the desert has now become very intense. The enemy are using large numbers of Me 109F's and MACCHI 202's. On a sortie this morning the Squadron met enemy aircraft, and Lt. FAURE shot down a 109F, and Lt. RABIE a MACCHI 202. Unfortunately Lt. RABIE was later attacked and shot down, but he baled out successfully at 15,000 feet, and returned to the Unit in the afternoon. At the same time FLIGHT SERGEANT MOUNT was shot down and is missing. He was last seen going down in a steady dive with the machine under control. In the afternoon the Squadron was out on another sortie, and SQUADRON LEADER WEDGWOOD shot down a 109F - making his ninth victory - and FLIGHT LIEUTENANT MORGAN shot down another. Squadron total of confirmed destroyed now 214½.

03/09/42

On a sortie this afternoon FLIGHT LIEUTENANT SAMOUELLE damaged a Me 109F. Since becoming operational in the M.E. Command, the Squadron total is 21 destroyed, 7 probables, and 29 damaged. The SENIOR MEDICAL OFFICER from WING inspected the Camp Sanitation and cookhouses, etc. He suggested one or two improvements connected with the lay-out of the Airmen's Cookhouse and the grease traps, but otherwise he found everything satisfactory. For the time being, as the battle is now on in the desert, all bathing parties and passes for the airmen have been stopped, but we are still managing to rest one or two of the pilots.

04/09/42

GROUP CAPTAIN O'MALLEY, the A.H.Q.W.D. MEDICAL OFFICER, Inspected the camp this morning. He made some suggestions for combating the menace of flies. On the whole the Camp does not suffer overmuch from flies. This evening the Squadron escorted the A.O.C.-in-C., AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR A. TEDDER from L.G. to BURG-AL-ARAB. The Squadron formation take-off was done in a dust-storm, when visibility was very poor, but it was one of the best take-offs that they had done.

05/09/42

The COMMANDING OFFICER, SQUADRON LEADER J.H. WEDGWOOD, went to a "tea-party" given by the A.O.C., WESTERN DESERT, to meet WENDELL WILKIE, the AMERICAN Statesman, who is now in the Middle East. Meeting of the SERGEANTS' MESS held this evening to discuss some difficulties that have arisen with the rations. The MEDICAL OFFICER drew up an experimental diet sheet, and it is hoped this difficulty will be overcome. The Sergeant Pilots were the guests of the Officers' Mess this evening. The Adjutant, FLYING OFFICER V.R. SAIGOL, made an ACTING FLIGHT LIEUTENANT w.e.f. May. P/O. TURVEY posted to the Squadron.

06/09/42

The battle In the WESTERN DESERT seems to have died down temporarily with the enemy being pushed westwards. No

encounters by the Squadron today during sorties. P/O. MENZIES, P/O. HARVEY and P/O. AYLOTT posted to the Squadron.

07/09/42

During a sortie today , P/O.MENZIES, on his first operational trip, unaccountably spun at 17,000 feet. For some reason he couldn't get out of the spin, didn't bale out, and went slap in. The Squadron lately has had a run of bad luck. Let's hope this ends it. Poor Menzies seemed a good chap, he only joined the Squadron yesterday afternoon. The Squadron Officers were the guests this evening, of the No.1 S.A.A.F. Squadron Mess.

08/09/42

The crashed aircraft in which P/O.MENZIES lost his life was located this morning in a most inaccessible part of the desert. A memorial service was held at the Squadron, with members of the Squadron in attendance. SQUADRON LEADER FORRESTER, WING CHAPLAIN, took the Service. The first party of men left on posting, following changes in the establishment caused by making the Squadron more mobile. The changes are going to make the work of running the Squadron much more difficult.

09/09/42

The glad news received that the whole Squadron is to be given seven days leave starting on September 11th. A "skeleton staff" will have to be left behind to look after the aircraft. They will get their leave the week following. The change in the establishment of Squadrons recently brought into force has been changed yet once

again. No private mail has been received for the Squadron for some days. This is being looked into.

10/09/42

L.A.C. McKIMM returned from BASE PERSONNEL STAFF OFFICE, where he had been working during the changes in the establishment, to say that the nominal rolls returned by the Squadron were perfectly in order. A conference of Adjutants held at WING to discuss the changes in the establishment. The "base parties" at HELWAN have now been disbanded. The Squadron Officers were the guests of No.1 S.A.A.F. this evening.

11/09/42

The Squadron went on leave this morning for seven days. Actually the atmosphere in the desert has been rather tense, and the rest will do the pilots and ground crews good. FLYING OFFICER RAWES remained behind as Officer i/c, and PILOT OFFICER HARVEY and PILOT OFFICER TURVEY remained behind as emergency pilots. The majority of airmen went to Alexandria, and the Officers to Cairo.

12/09/42

The technical personnel remained behind to carry out inspections of all aircraft. As the Squadron was taken out of the line yesterday, this is a good opportunity, to service the aircraft. Two more Spitfire V's arrived today.

13/09/42

Final inspections of the aircraft finished today. A skeleton staff of guards will be remaining behind to look after the aircraft. A bathing party held for airmen remaining on the Camp.

14/09/42

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT WOOLGROVE took over the care of the Squadron from FLYING OFFICER RAWES, who went on leave this morning. P/O.TURVEY and P/O. HARVEY, who had remained behind as emergency pilots, went on leave today, and FLIGHT SERGEANTS NOVAK and SHAFER took their place.

15/09/42

Signal received that L.A.C. BRETTER had died from pneumonia, following the injuries he suffered when an A.P. bomb exploded near him during the last air raid. BRETTER'S death is most unfortunate, because he was very good at his work and well liked by everybody. Information also received that SERGEANT PILOT WATSON, who had been missing, believed killed, since July 17th, was a Prisoner Of War.

16/09/42

Camp inspection carried out by FLIGHT LIEUTENANT WOOLGROVE. The mail situation has been rather difficult of late, as a lot of letters seem to be taking a very long time to reach us.

17/09/42

The Squadron returned from leave today, which had passed all too quickly and pleasantly. The advance party of Officers with the COMMANDING OFFICER arrived about 1630 hours. A little later the WING COMMANDER rang up the COMMANDING OFFICER, SQUADRON LEADER J.H.WEDGWOOD, and informed him that he had been awarded the DFC. This is a thoroughly well deserved honour, because the COMMANDING OFFICER has led the Squadron on practically every operational trip in the desert, and he has done more than anyone to build up the reputation of 92 squadron in the desert. He has shot down nine enemy aircraft - no mean feat. This is the first "gong" the Squadron has won in the desert. May it be the herald of many more.

18/09/42

A GREEK Squadron moved in to share our landing ground with us. They are going to fly HURRICANES. The LIEUTENANT-COLONEL in charge of the Ack-Ack guns defending the landing grounds here called to see the COMMANDING OFFICER to arrange where to site his guns. LIEUTENANT FAURE, attached from No.1 S.A.A.F. Squadron, returned to his Squadron today. He will be greatly missed by all.

19/09/42

The Squadron were on readiness again today. The GREEK Officers were the guests of the Mess this evening. PILOT OFFICER HILL and FLIGHT SERGEANT BLADES posted to the Squadron from No.

80 SQUADRON. There is still difficulty in obtaining the new type of latrine buckets from Stores. A film show given at WING for the airmen.

20/09/42

News received that PILOT OFFICER BRADLEY SMITH has been posted away, unfit, from the Squadron, but that he will be posted back to us when fit. PILOT OFFICER COOKE, who went on compassionate leave to RHODESIA on the 8th, has had to have it changed to a posting to enable him to reach RHODESIA, but it is hoped to re-post him back to the Squadron. The Squadron now hold 14 SPITFIRE VC's and 2 VB's. The weather is now getting much cooler in the desert. The Squadron did a brief sortie today, but saw nothing.

21/09/42

On a patrol this evening eight SPITFIRES, led by SQUADRON LEADER WEDGWOOD, ran into fifty enemy aircraft and put up a magnificent show. They retained their formation and fought the enemy for over ten minutes, until the enemy broke away. The patrol then continued their way to EL ALAMEIN. Though no enemy aircraft were shot down, the Squadron put up a grand show, proving that eight SPITFIRES well handled, could hold their own with more than fifty Me 109F's and MACCHI 202's. On the return of the Squadron, GROUP rang up immediately to congratulate them.

22/09/42

A personal signal was sent from the A.O.C., AIR VICE MARSHAL CONINGHAM, to SQUADRON LEADER WEDGWOOD, congratulating him on his DFC. and on the great show put up yesterday. This evening for the first time In the WESTERN DESERT a complete SPITFIRE WING of 28 planes, led by SQUADRON LEADER WEDGWOOD, went out on patrol, but saw nothing. PILOT OFFICER L. SMITH went to No. 21 M.R.S. suffering from enteritis. This evening the Squadron Officers were the guests of No.1 S.A.A.F.

23/06/42

Along with the new establishment designed to make the Squadron more mobile, we are now trying to get rid of as many E.P.I.P. tents as possible, and substituting bivouac tents for ridge tents, and ridge for E.P.I.P. The COMMANDING OFFICER and P/O. CHISHOLM went out on a sortie to try and find an E-Boat, but though they searched the coast they saw nothing. The R.C. Padre came along this afternoon to arrange new times for celebrating Mass.

24/09/42

Meeting of the P.S.I. Committee this evening. The funds are in a good position. The problem of dust here, which gets churned into deep ruts by lorries, makes all traffic very difficult. COLONEL SULLIVAN, of the UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCE, visited the

camp this morning and stayed for lunch. A film show was given at WING for the airmen.

25/09/42

A BALTIMORE aircraft unfortunately crashed on the other side of the landing ground this morning. The crew were killed. The DEFENCE OFFICER and the ADJUTANT went over to see the new Officer in charge of the INDIAN Troops guarding the landing ground to make sure that plans for the defence of the L.G. against possible parachute troops were mutually understood. A meeting of Airmen's Messing Committee was held this evening.

26/09/42

The Squadron was ordered off as top cover to HURRICANES and went out to near DABA, and were attacked by Me 109's. FLIGHT LIEUTENANT MORGAN shot one down and P/O. G.W. ROSE another, both confirmed. P/O. CARPENTER got a "probable" and FLIGHT SERGEANT BLADES a damaged. Unfortunately WARRANT OFFICER KENWOOD was shot down behind the enemy lines, and P/O. TURVEY was also shot down, but successfully baled out, and has rejoined the Squadron. It is hoped that WARRANT OFFICER KENWOOD landed successfully. He will be surely missed by the Squadron. He was a good pilot, and a grand fellow in every way. He had been put up for a commission.

27/09/42

The MESSING OFFICER inspected airmen's meals today. Rations continue to be very good, and with the extra messing through

P.S.I., there are few complaints about food. P/O.HARVEY was sent to No.21 M.R.S. today suffering from food poisoning caught in ALEXANDRIA yesterday. P/O. CORNISH, back from WING, is with the Squadron to act as INTELLIGENCE OFFICER during the temporary indisposition of F/O.BROOKS.

28/09/42

This afternoon F/Lt. MORGAN and P/O. CHISHOLM were scrambled to chase a Ju 88. While out they ran into 20 Me 109's. A terrific dogfight followed. Both pilots fired, but the going was too hot to see results. The remainder of the Squadron had been scrambled shortly afterwards, and they ran into a bunch of Me 109's. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE shot one down, and P/O. CARPENTER damaged another. Unfortunately, to date, the Army have only established two definite crashes. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE'S, and the other where F/Lt. MORGAN and P/O. CHISHOLM were fighting, they are sharing. All the pilots returned safely.

29/09/42

The C.O, away on 48. Yesterday's aircraft so far definitely confirmed only one - Squadron score now 217½ destroyed - F/Lt. . SAMOUELLE'S. P/O.HARVEY returned to the Squadron today. Visit of one of REAR AIR HEADQUARTERS, WESTERN DESERT, WELFARE OFFICERS, PADRE FORRESTER, of WING, is trying to get us some books for the Library.

30/09/42

Visit to the Squadron of a group of TURKISH OFFICERS, with GROUP CAPTAIN CARTER, of GROUP; and the WING COMMANDER. The TURKISH Officers were shown round the Maintenance Section and round the Equipment Stores, and then they went to the Dispersal Tent. There is a very hot spell on now in the desert, and the soft, powdery dust, which is more than a foot deep over wide areas of the camp, makes aircraft and M.T. serviceability very difficult. Our landing ground is one of the worst in this part of the desert. Some games have been bought out of P.S.I. for the Airmen's Canteen, and we are trying to get them a ping-pong table.

01/10/42

PILOT OFFICER GLENDINNING, R.A.A.F., and WARRANT OFFICER EDWARDS posted to the Squadron and arrived today for flying duties. FLYING OFFICER BRUCE, a former member of 92 Squadron, arrived today from HELIOPOLIS to see the Commanding Officer.

02/10/42

LIEUTENANT RABIE and FLYING OFFICE HILL were scrambled suddenly this morning and were airborne in 1 min. 5 seconds for which Group and Wing congratulated them. They were vectored out on to a Ju 88. Eventually they found it, and they both fired and bits flew off the aircraft. Lt. RABIE chased it out to sea and kept firing till he saw it crash in the sea. This is the first twin-engine

bomber to be shot down by the Squadron this year. Squadron total now 218½.

03/10/42

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT MORGAN left this morning to spend three days up at the front near EL ALAMEIN with the ARMY. In his place CAPTAIN HUTCHISON, RIFLE BRIGADE, attached to DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS, is spending three days with the Squadron. FLYING OFFICER WADDY, DFC., posted to the Squadron from No.3 S.A.A.F. SQUADRON. Signal received late this evening that P/O. BRADLEY SMITH, who had been on sick leave in JERUSALEM, had been readmitted to hospital (43rd General).

04/10/42

CHURCH OF ENGLAND Service held in the Parachute Section this evening. At the moment the weather is dry and windy, with virulent sandstorms blowing every time there's a wind. But if rain should come, this loose sand will turn to slush. Still masses of flies everywhere. The weather now much cooler, and not so many of these damn scorpions and centipedes and things around. We're getting quite attached to this miserable patch of desert of ours.

05/10/42

First day of rain this evening. Enough to lay the sand and dust. A little leaked through the tents. Things are very quiet nowadays and the Squadron for the last day or two have done very little flying.

06/10/42

Still very quiet in the desert. Two of our pilots on patrol over the enemy lines reported that the recent heavy rains seem to have flooded their landing grounds. They met no fighter opposition and little backpack. We have been issued with our five blankets each for the coming winter, but our battle dress hasn't yet arrived.

07/10/42

LIEUTENANT SMITH, of No.5 SAAF. SQUADRON, posted to the Squadron, and arrived today. The Squadron went out on patrol today and ran into two Me 109's. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE destroyed one and P/O. CHISHOLM the other, both being confirmed. Squadron total now 220½ destroyed. CAPTAIN HUTCHISON returned to his Unit today. No. 146 SQUADRON (SPITFIRES) moved in today to share our landing ground. They are on the sight used by the GREEK SQUADRON.

08/10/42

PILOT OFFICER L. SMITH returned from sick leave to the Squadron. Four pilots led by P/O. CHISHOLM, made a recce flight over the enemy landing ground at DABA. They met no opposition, and the landing ground appeared to be bogged. A little more rain fell today. F/Lt. MORGAN returned to the Squadron from his four days spent at the front, during which he went out on patrol with Army units into No-Man's-Land. He had a very exciting time and brought back several souvenirs.

09/10/42

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT COCKER returned to the Squadron today. A very welcome return. He is not properly fit to fly yet. A very busy day in the air today. Almost every bomber and fighter aircraft in the desert was up, and the R.A.F. put up a terrible strafe on the enemy landing grounds. In the morning the COMMANDING OFFICER led the Squadron on a sortie near FUKA. Enemy aircraft were engaged, and S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD DFC., shot down 2 Me 109's and F/Lt. SAMOUELLE got another. All our aircraft returned safely. Squadron total now 223½ destroyed. There was another sortie later. Unfortunately, P/O. HARVEY failed to return from this. In the evening there was a Wing sortie, led by WING COMMANDER LOVE. F/Lt. MORGAN led the Squadron. Enemy aircraft were met and F/Lt. MORGAN and F/Sgt. HEMPSTEAD between them got a probable, F/Lt. SAMOUELLE got a damaged, and P/O. HILL fired at and hit another. Altogether this was one of the heaviest days of air activity in the desert.

10/10/42

This evening the Squadron were detailed to do a "Rhubarb". Apparently some confusion arose, as Group had given orders that there was to be no ground strafing, but these orders were not passed on to the Squadron. Ground targets behind enemy lines near FUKA were well attacked. Unfortunately the Squadron lost F/O. HILL who was reported to have crashed in flames, and W/O. EDWARDS, who landed on the sea. W/O. EDWARDS had only been with the Squadron a few days, but he had the makings of a good

pilot. F/O. HILL was a most experienced pilot, posted to us from No. 80 Squadron, and he was a most attractive personality. He will be very sorely missed.

11/10/42

We are getting SPITFIRE VB's with MERLIN 46 engines to replace our VC's that have been lost. A quiet day today on the whole. Yesterday was the Squadron's third birthday. The airmen had a sing-song and the band was in attendance at the airmen's Canteen. Unfortunately two very heavy days' work and the loss of three pilots in the last two days rather dampened the fun.

12/10/42

PILOT OFFICER SLY, R.A.A.F., posted to the Squadron today. The Squadron has been rested from Ops. for a week to do some training and to get the serviceability up to scratch. SERGEANT MONAGHAN, i/c Ground Gunners, is away on a fortnight's course and F/Lt. WOOLGROVE, MEDICAL OFFICER, is away on week's course. The Squadron football team beat 601 SQUADRON by 1 — 0.

13/10/42

Training was carried out in the Flights today, with the pilots learning to re-load and re-fuel their aircraft. P/O. BAKER was posted to the Squadron today from No. 238 SQUADRON. LIEUTENANT RABIE was sent sick to No. 21 M.R.S. for observation.

14/10/42

This morning the AIR OFFICER COMMANDING, WESTERN DESERT, AIR VICE-MARSHAL CONINGHAM, visited the Squadron. After addressing the Airman, the A.O.C. went to the Pilots' Mess, where he met all the pilots and officers. He talked to them for some minutes about the shape of things to come and then had lunch in the Mess. There is unfortunately an outbreak of tonsillitis in the Squadron, and the airmen are gargling twice a day.

15/10/42

Lt. RABIE has been admitted to S.A. Hospital, HELMIEH. Owing to the increase of tonsillitis in the Squadron, airmen have been warned to sit out in the open after dark instead of crowding into the Canteen.

16/10/42

In the afternoon one of the worst sandstorms ever sprang up. There was a strong, high wind of great force, and it blew the sand round in an orange, opaque mass. All sense of direction or visibility was lost. Suddenly, almost as soon as the sandstorm was over, it began to rain heavily. Every tent was soaked, with great pools of water lying on the clayey dust. It left the place an absolute quagmire. The SPITFIRES are serviceable, but it would be impossible to take them up in the air.

17/10/42

This evening the COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. J.H. WEDGWOOD, DFC, went to a party given at ADVANCED AIR HEADQUARTERS, WESTERN DESERT, by AIR VICE-MARSHAL CONINGHAM in honour of AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR TEDDER, and MARSHAL OF THE AIR FORCE LORD TRENCHARD, who is visiting the WESTERN DESERT. Today the camp was simply an infinite series of wide pools of water stretching across a flat of dark brown, sodden sand. The tents, the clothes, the furniture, the aircraft, everything was saturated. Fortunately the rain only came in gusts today, and in between these was a strong wind which at least dried blankets and some of the clothes.

18/10/42

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR TEDDER visited the Squadron for a brief moment this morning. FLYING OFFICER SCUDDAY, of No. 4 S.A.A.F. SQUADRON, posted to us today. Also SERGEANT PILOT PATTERSON from No. 238 SQUADRON. F/Sgt., PILOT SHAFER left to Join No. 59 R.S.U.

19/10/42

The Squadron were on a sortie this morning and on return to base there was an unfortunate collision between a Spitfire of No. 145 SQUADRON, and one of ours. The tail unit of our Spitfire was cut right off and it spun right in, and crashed between the tents. FLIGHT SERGEANT HEMPSTEAD, the pilot, was killed instantly. This accident has robbed the Squadron of an experienced, cool,

highly competent pilot and a fine, level-headed, capable man, who was due, very shortly, to get his commission. F/Sgt. HEMPSTEAD was buried this afternoon at the SOUTH AFRICAN WAR CEMETERY at Kilo 151. The Padre of No. 244 WING officiating. P/O. JOERNS was posted to the Squadron from No. 4 S.A.A.F. SQUADRON. F/O. BROOKS returned to the Squadron today.

20/10/42

F/O. BROOKS left the Squadron today on posting out of the desert. He had been with the Squadron as Intelligence Officer for some months, and he will be much missed. P/O. AYLOTT was also posted today from the Squadron to R.A.F. Station, HELIOPOLIS. No. 80 SQUADRON are now back in the desert, and some of their members visited the Pilots' Mess tonight. From midnight tonight Cairo and Alexandria are out of bounds. F/Lt. WOOLGROVE returned from his course today.

21/10/42

FLYING OFFICER BRUCE posted to the Squadron today. The COMMANDING OFFICER announced to the officers and pilots certain preliminaries caused by news of the impending battle. A very heavy day's bombing was observed overhead. The recent heavy rain has laid all the dust and the autumnal weather in the desert is now delightful. Two more SPITFIRES collected today, making a total of 16.

22/10/42

On a sortie today S/Ldr. J.H. WEDGWOOD, DFC., shot down a Me 109 and F/O.WADDY, DFC., shot down another. The C.O.'s total bag is now 12. SERGEANT PILOT SAILS posted to the Squadron today, making 25 Pilots excluding the C.O. Postings have been so very rapid in the last few days that there may be some difficulty in working up a team spirit. That is always the case when a rush of new pilots comes to a Squadron. There was a film show at Wing this evening. The COMMANDING OFFICER went to GROUP this evening, the A.O.C. and the Deputy A.O.C. in C were present. A brief history of the Squadron was telephoned to Group today, apparently at the request of Air Ministry.

23/10/42

This evening at 10 o'clock by the light of a brilliant full moon a full scale attack was launched against the enemy positions at EL ALAMEIN. There had been two or three days of intensive daylight bombing with fighter escort by the Air Force. The Squadron did two sorties in four's only. Both were uneventful.

24/10/42

The battle in the Northern Sector of the AL ALAMEIN front is progressing favourably, where a definite break through has been made. The Squadron did more sorties in fours, but without incident, in spite of the continuous and heavy day bombing that is going on. The Squadron now has 20 aircraft. Meeting of the P.S.I. Committee held this evening.

25/10/42

On a sortie today over the Central Sector F/Lt. MORGAN was leading a patrol of four aircraft when two Me 109's were engaged. F/Lt. MORGAN shot one down, and Lt. HEWITSON chased the other and got in a burst, but was unable to see the effect of his shots. The push in the NORTHERN SECTOR is continuing well. Meetings of airmen's messing committee held this evening.

26/10/42

The Squadron again doing patrols in fours. On a patrol F/O.WADDY, DFC. and P/O. L. SMITH sighted two Me 109's and attacked, F/O.WADDY destroying one of them, F/O.WADDY'S own score is now 14½ confirmed destroyed. This makes him the second highest fighter pilot amongst Australians. Nine surplus Ground Gunners posted away from us today.

27/10/42

Another day of sorties in fours. This morning P/O. CHISHOLM and F/O. GLENDINNING were on patrol between DABA and ALAMEIN at about 17,000 feet, when two Me 109's were sighted. Both Me. 109's were destroyed, each pilot claiming one destroyed. P/O. CHISHOLM'S own total now 7 destroyed. This evening the WING COMMANDER led a dusk patrol from our L.G. to try and catch a Stuka Party, which usually bomb our lines at dusk. No Stuka's were seen. The patrol included the three C.O.'s of the Wing. On landing the C.O. of 601 Squadron crashed his aircraft, but was unhurt, and P/O. CHISHOLM landed on one wheel and damaged

his mainplane. SERGEANT PILOT THOMPSON rejoined the Squadron today.

28/10/42

The German and Italian Air Force seen to have stiffened their resistance, and apparently they have brought squadrons over from SICILY. Today was a very unlucky day for 92. In the morning, whilst on a sortie in fours, P/Sgt. BLADES was shot up and belly-landed his aircraft this side our lines. He was unhurt, and later returned to the Squadron. On the next sortie of fours, they again encountered superior numbers of enemy aircraft, F/Sgt. NOVAK being shot up and forced landed this side our lines. He was unhurt. F/Lt. COCKER failed to return. During these sorties Sgt. PATTERSON damaged a Me 109 and F/O. BUCKLEY another.

29/10/42

The WING went out at two-squadron strength this morning, led by WING COMMANDER LOVE, S/Ldr. J.H. WEDGWOOD, DFC., flying as No. 2. At about 15,000 feet near ALAMEIN they ran into Stukas escorted by Me 109's. S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD shot down a Me 109, making his total 13. P/O. WADDY, DFC. also got a 109 confirmed. The Squadron total is now 231½. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE got a damaged later in the day. The big battle is still going on, with plenty of shell fire on both sides. In the Northern Sector the Army are definitely establishing themselves. The R.A.F. is giving the Army tremendous bomber and fighter support.

30/10/42

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR TEDDER paid a brief visit to the Squadron in the afternoon. The A.O.C-in-C. landed near the dispersal tent in his FIESELER STORCH, and then talked to the pilots outside the tent. He seemed well pleased with the battle now going on, though he thought progress would be slow. He hoped the Squadron would continue to engage the enemy in the air as vigorously as ever.

31/10/42

The "damaged" which F/Lt. SAMOUELLE got two days ago has been confirmed destroyed. The Squadron total confirmed destroyed is 233½. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE'S own score is 6. Day liberty runs have been started again into ALEXANDRIA for the pilots. The clocks were put back one hour this evening. The Camp is now much cleaner as far as the latrines and kitchens go, but there is still a fair amount of litter left about.

01/11/42

A quieter day in the air today, with slightly fewer bomber sorties made over the front. The squadron were on patrol over the front when they became separated during an attack by 109's. P/O. SLY was shot at and had to belly-land at another L.G. A party was held at Wing to celebrate their 100th victim since the Wing became operational this summer. The 100th victim was shot down by 92 SQUADRON. The weather seems to have become much more autumnal today.

02/11/42

This morning the 8th ARMY broke through the enemy defences around the ALAMEIN SECTOR and fighting is now in progress South of DABA. On a patrol this morning north of ALAMEIN the squadron saw two Me 109's just below them. P/O. CARPENTER dived down and fired at one. It burst into flames and the pilot baled out. This is P/O. CARPENTER'S first victory, and he is to be heartily Congratulated. On a patrol later in the day the Squadron intercepted some Me 109's that were trying to attack some HURRICANES. S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD led his Section against a formation of 109's and he himself obtained a "probable." F/Lt. SAMOUELLE led his Section against another formation and destroyed a Me 109, making his total score 7 destroyed. The Squadron's total score is 235½.

03/11/42

The enemy forces seem to be on the retreat today. Aircraft reported that the road between DABA and FUKA was blocked with vehicles moving westwards. The Squadron did three sorties and one patrol of four, but all without incident.

04/11/42

Provisional notice given that the Squadron would be moving forward shortly. Told to be at four hours stand-by notice. The Squadron went out on patrol today and confirmed that the enemy were definitely on the retreat. Very little enemy opposition was encountered.

05/11/42

The Advance Party warned at dawn to leave at two hours notice. About 0800 hours the convoy of the Advance party lined up on the road. F/Lt. MORGAN was convoy-leader with F/O.WADDY, DFC., as convoy navigator, and F/Lt. SAIGOL (Adjutant), P/O. BOLLAND, W/O. SANDERSON and 'B' FLIGHT. They halted first at BURG-EL-ARAB and then, with WING, and the other SPITFIRE SQUADRONS, continued on the way to L.G. 21. The battle had evidently only recently passed this way, as lorries of captured prisoners were encountered, there were still burnt-out GERMAN tanks along the track, and signs everywhere that the enemy had retreated very hurriedly. At night the party encamped in the desert near ALAMEIN.

06/11/42

The Advance Party reached L.G.21 near DABA today. The L.G. had Me 109's on it in various places including three Me 109's, in almost perfect condition, dated September of this year. The L.G. is rather a good way off the road and rather isolated. It was noticed that the enemy dispersal of aircraft was extremely good. They had evidently only left this L.G. a bare 24 hours before the party arrived.

07/11/42

The Squadron pilots, led by S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD, DFC., arrived at dawn on L.G.21, whilst the MAIN PARTY had orders to travel to SIDI HANEISH (L.G.13). Pilots went off on patrol and saw that the

enemy were in full retreat, apparently having reached the "wire" on the EGYPTIAN FRONTIER. Lt. SMITH on leaving L.G.173 this morning "pranged" his aircraft through inexperience with overload tanks.

08/11/42

The ADJUTANT, F/Lt. SAIGOL, went ahead this morning and caught up with the MAIN PARTY, which rested for a time at L.G.14 near MAARTEN BAGUSH, and then went on to SIDI HANEISH (L.G.30). Rations are a difficulty and water is at an absolute premium.

09/11/42

Squadron went out on patrol near SIDI BARRANI. An enemy column of traffic was on the road and the Squadron dived down and strafed it sending trucks up in flames and overturning lorries. Me 109's which were escorting the column attacked the Squadron and F/Sgt. BLADES was shot down, and his machine was seen to hit the ground and burst into flames. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE shot at a 109 and saw strikes. Lt. HEWITSON was fired at by backpack and his airscrew was hit, but he got back safely. The ADVANCE PARTY under F/O. WADDY and P/O. CHISHOLM are on their way to MESHEFA (L.G.76). They encamped for the night at the bottom of the road near the rest of the Squadron. The GERMANS have now retreated to SOLLUM and the district round SIDI BARRANI.

10/11/42

It is now clear that a very considerable victory has been won and the AXIS Forces cleared right out of EGYPT. His main forces are now said to have retreated almost to TOBRUK. The rest at SIDI HANESH is doing the Squadron transport "B" PARTY a world of good. There is very little enemy opposition in the air.

11/11/42

The enemy retreat continues. Water shortage is acute, but we were fortunate to obtain 350 gallons at FUKA, this will have to last the MAIN PARTY of 200-odd men a matter of three or more days. Rations are also somewhat difficult to obtain, but fortunately supplies of M.T. petrol, aviation petrol and ammunition are plentiful. This continual movement, rising in darkness, travelling at first light is quite a strain, but the airmen are doing splendidly.

12/11/42

The Squadron ADVANCE PARTY had left for L.G.55 a day or two ago, but enormous convoys on the roads cut their speed till they only travelled about six miles in four hours. The MAIN PARTY had better luck and raced past MERSA MATRUH, rejoined the WING at the Desert Route, following the pipe line, and reached MESHEFA only a few hours after the ADVANCE PARTY. The MAIN PARTY have to continue to GAMBUT. Water and rations are still acute and tea is rationed to one cup three times a day. Biscuits instead of bread and no "loot" of any description.

13/11/42

The Squadron MAIN PARTY crossed the wire marking the boundary between LIBYA and EGYPT today. The wayside was supposed to be strewn with minefields so the lorries kept very strictly to the track. We same to SIDI AZIZ. All the WING SQUADRONS and WING HEADQUARTERS travelling together, and late in the day reached GAMBUT WEST, and about an hour later were joined by the COMMANDING OFFICER and pilots.

14/11/42

Both parties of the Squadron together for the day at GAMBUT, which is quite a nice spot. P/O. NOMIS, an AMERICAN pilot, joined the Squadron a few days ago. There are several wells in the district though the water is muddy. Unfortunately supplies of rations and M.T. petrol have not caught up with us yet. The enemy are said to be well on the way to BENGHAZI. Certainly no GERMAN aircraft have been seen by the Squadron while on patrol. The lorries, which so far have stood the strain of the desert track well, are now being serviced in preparation for the journeying into TRIPOLI.

15/11/42

The ADVANCE PARTY moved off this morning from GAMBUT WEST for MARTUBA. The weather which had been hot and sunny broke today and became cold with high wind and some rain.

16/11/42

The pilots took off for MARTUBA L.G., but they were recalled as heavy rain had made the ground unserviceable. Rained heavily at

GAMBUT WEST this morning. No alcohol of any sort in the bar. A meeting of the P.S.I. this afternoon to discuss the Christmas dinner. In addition to 9d. per man for the day, and a further grant of £20, P.S.I. are giving about £60.

17/11/42

No news of when we are likely to move forward. The enemy forces are said to be down by EL AGHEILA, where they were in January of this year. A violent thunderstorm burst over the escarpment this evening, with torrents of rain. The weather is now cold at night and early day, with a warm spell in the late morning and afternoon. P/O. BRUCE returned from Hospital yesterday.

18/11/42

The weather now cold with a strong wind and frequent rain. The Squadron pilots seem to be marking time here at GAMBUT. The ADVANCE PARTY is said to be at MARTUBA. F/O. DUKE, DFC., an ex-Squadron pilot when in U.K. was today posted to the Squadron.

19/11/42

F/O.WADDY, D.F.C., R.A.A.F., was posted away from the Squadron today and back to AUSTRALIA, on completing a "meritorious operational tour," with his score as 15½ confirmed destroyed. Although F/O.WADDY had got most of his big score before joining the Squadron, he soon made a home and a reputation for himself here. He thoroughly deserves the honour of being repatriated, and he will be much missed. Some of the Officers paid a visit to the

much-battered TOBRUK today. A little operational flying was done this morning, but there were no glimpses of the enemy.

20/11/42

No.1 S.A.A.F. SQUADRON have Joined 244 WING as a Spitfire Squadron in place of No. 73 SQUADRON, HURRICANE night fighters. We are still far away from the battle, and there is no sign yet of the SPITFIRES becoming operational.

21/11/42

As far as we are concerned there is a curious lull in the battle. There are some 80 SPITFIRES parked on the L.G. doing nothing. Slight troubles again over the water. The wells are very Muddy. News received today that we shall probably be moving on to M'SUS.

22/11/42

The latest news is that we are shortly moving on to MSUS, using the desert track from TMEML. Except for sugar, rations and water are now plentiful, and we had fresh meat for dinner this evening for the first time since we advanced.

23/11/42

WING COMMANDER DARWIN, D.F.C. and Bar, took over Command of No. 244 WING. Squadron Leader HARPER posted to the Squadron as supernumerary. Rations, water and M.T. patrol collected for movement of Squadron MAIN PARTY to M'SUS.

Squadron ADVANCE PARTY arrived at M'SUS today from MARTUBA, with P/O. BOLLAND and Lt.SINCLAIR.

24/11/42

The pilots, under S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD, D.F.C., left GAMBUT WEST for M'SUS this morning. The MAIN PARTY then left, went down the escarpment and took the road for EL ADEM. Camp was pitched for the night East of GAZALA.

25/11/42

The MAIN PARTY moved off at 5 this morning, travelling by the light of the moon, reached TMEI by 0730, and there struck the desert track for MEKELI. The track, beyond one or two patches of wet sand, was not too bad, and MEKELI FORT was reached about 1500 hours. Then the odyssey of the convoy began. The convoy missed the desert track leading direct to M'SUS, and we wandered too far north-west. There was very boggy marshland in which the lorries with the trailers were bogged. And getting then out and over some very difficult wadis was a very difficult job. Camp was pitched for the night Just beyond MEKELI FORT.

26/11/42

The MAIN PARTY continued when the desert tracks were easily visible — about 0645 hours, and at about 1000 a deep wadi on the edge of an escarpment seemed to make further progress somewhat of a puzzle. However, with the capable assistance of P/O. ALLEN, M.T. Officer, and F/O. RAWES, ENGINEER OFFICER, the convoy was taken over the wadi and round the escarpment. It was then

clear that we were too far north and pretty well lost. Although LIBYA was supposed to be filled with soldiers and tanks and aircraft, we had travelled without seeing anybody but a few camel drivers. We eventually made for CHARRUBA, and then hit the M'SUS track from there due south.

27/11/42

Off again at first light. The M'SUS track was flat and in many places as smooth and level as a first-class road. The convoy finally reached M'SUS at about 0930. The Squadron is now re-united, and both parties have made the long Journey from AMRIYA to M'SUS without losing a single vehicle, in spite of doing hundreds of miles over the desert. The Squadron has done two sweeps in the last two days, but without incident. Various modifications are being made to the SPITFIRES with a view to lightening the load.

28/11/42

Camp established at M'SUS. Water is available from 3 miles away, situated fortunately not too far away. The COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD, D.F.C., addressed the pilots, and later the airmen of the Squadron.

29/11/42

Ten pilots of "A" Flight under F/Lt. SAMOUELLE, went to ANTELAT for the night in case they were needed. P/O. McMAHON posted to the Squadron from No. 80 SQUADRON. SERGEANT-PILOT THOMPSON and FLIGHT-SERGEANT CLAPSON posted from the Squadron to No. 59 R.S.U. Both pilots have been with the

Squadron for nearly a year. They are both much liked and they will be greatly missed. News received that W/O. KENWOOD, now commissioned, and missing since September, was a Prisoner-Of-War.

30/11/42

News received that the WING ADVANCE PARTIES were to proceed tomorrow to HASSIET. The pilots of "A" FLIGHT are still operating from ANTELAT, and the Squadron MAIN PARTY will collect the necessary lorries from them. Rations to be obtained from 233 WING.

M'SUS

01/12/42

The pilots of "A" Flight who had been at Antelat returned today. "A" Party left for Hassiet which is about 50 miles from the El Agheila position. 7 Days rations were received today including bully beef, biscuits, M & V, dried fruit, sugar, tea and milk and if the water situation were more satisfactory life could be quite comfortable. S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD'S farewell party held this evening in his trailer.

02/12/42

COMMANDING OFFICER J.M. MORGAN

S/Ldr. Wedgwood DFC, officially relinquished his command of the Squadron today. The entire squadron feels his departure as a

personal loss. He took command of this squadron at Digby in January, brought it overseas, and led it with conspicuous gallantry in battle in the desert. His personal score was 13 destroyed and during 4 months of fighting under his leadership the squadron shot down 42 confirmed destroyed. He was an extraordinarily able leader in the air and his "first 12" were probably more efficient than any other 12 this Unit ever had even in its balmy days. The A.O.C.W.D. had personally recommended his return to U.K. after a particularly meritorious tour of duty and we hope that this, together with his promotion to Wing Commander will not be long withheld, and we wish him every success for the future. The new C.O. is F/Lt. J.M. MORGAN formerly Flight Commander of "B" Flight whose own score is 6 confirmed and we wish him every success for the future. P/O. (Acting F/Lt.) CHISHOLM takes over command of "B" Flight.

03/12/42

"B" Parties of the Wing left for El Hassiet. Desert track in fairly good condition and the party camped for the night near Agedabia . Pilots escorted a Tac/R machine and on landing A/F/Lt. CHISHOLM broke an oleo leg and was fortunate in not being hurt.

EL HASSIET

04/12/42

Squadron established at El Hassiet today. The camp is a wilderness and the area around heavily mined. Squadron escorted a Tac/R.

machine but apart from meeting considerable A.A. fire no incident was reported.

05/12/42

Squadron patrol this afternoon but no incident. German positions, about 60 miles away and plans drawn up by Colonel Bouillon, Fighting French to cover area in case of paratrooper attacks.

06/12/42

F/O. JOWSEY, F/Sgt. PROBERT and Sgt. McNAMARA posted to this Unit today from 33 Squadron . Sgt. Tattum and F/Sgt. Quartermain posted away.

07/12/42

During a patrol this afternoon over El Agheila the squadron ran into some 109's and P/O. JOERNS was shot down but baled out successfully. Lt. SMITH SAAF, has not yet returned and F/O. BRUCE and Lt. SINCLAIR, SAAF landed at Agedabia. S/L MORGAN got a damaged which may be confirmed and two other aircraft were seen burning on the ground.

08/12/42

Lt. SMITH returned safely today. "A" Party moved off today to a forward LG near Agedabia road. The squadron did a patrol this afternoon and saw some 109's but did not make contact. P/O. BRICKHILL and F/Sgt. BURMAN posted to us today. The A.O.C. told the C.O. that this Wing (244) would be one of the three fighter wings going forward to Tripoli.

09/12/42

"A" Party moved on to El Nogra L.G. about 18 miles from El Agheila, where the German line begins. Weather and rations are good but there is a shortage of M.T. aviation fuel and water. Squadron did a patrol, encountered A. A. fire but no enemy aircraft.

10/12/42

The enemy retreating from El Agheila - squadron did a patrol as far up as Marble Arch but nothing to report except A.A. fire.

11/12/42

Squadron patrol over Marble Arch this afternoon - heavy and accurate A.A. fire encountered which broke a wheel off P/O. JOERNS' aircraft which overturned on landing but he was unhurt. Lt. RABIE and Lt. SINCLAIR sent away on 7 days leave prior to their papers coming through as O.T.E. They will be greatly missed and we wish them good luck in the future.

EL NOGRA

12/12/42

Bad weather made L.G. unserviceable today. Airmen's Hess meeting held this afternoon to discuss shortage of rations etc., due to transport difficulties and fewness of ports.

13/12/42

F/Sgt. NOCAK posted back to Squadron today. P/O. L.R.SMITH went to Gazala on 10 days detachment to the "pilots pool" there.

14/12/42

Arrangements made with Wing that the "Desert Lily" (Heinkel 111) used by Group for bringing beer should also include squadron. Squadron escorted 2 Tac/R. aircraft over Marble Arch where heavy and accurate A.A fire was encountered but no enemy aircraft which seem to be few and far between these days.

15/12/42

Heavy rain today made LG still unserviceable. Both pilots and airmen have some cause to grumble over the inadequacy of the food. S/Ldr. COTTON of P. Staff visited S/Ldr. MORGAN today.

16/12/42

Patrol over the forward troops 10 miles west of Marble Arch today. No enemy aircraft seen but plenty of activity on the ground. New Zealand troops have cut the road near Marble Arch cutting off some of the enemy. F/O. GLENDINNING RAAF, posted as a Flight Commander to 450(RAAF) Squadron today.

17/12/42

Patrol over the Mediterranean between Benghazi and Marble Arch today to look for a dinghy with aircrew aboard. It was found. W/C DARWEN addresses the pilots on tactics this afternoon. F/Sgt.

NOVAK detached to 59 RSU prior to posting. P/O. JOERNS returned from Medical Board today. He is to be posted to the U.K.

18/12/42

A bad smash occurred this morning when P/O. TURVEY, taking off on a scramble crashed into a badly dispersed aircraft of 601 Squadron. He is suffering from severe shock but no bones broken. "A" Party left the LG this afternoon to go on to the Marble Arch area.

19/12/42

P/O. JOERNS left today. No flying. The L.G. is very difficult for Spits to take off and land but the surrounding country sports rolling dunes, wild birds of about six different varieties and wild geese on a nearby lake.

20/12/42

No Flying today. Some Officers went shooting near the lake and S/L. MORGAN shot a plover, F/Lt. SAMOUELLE a quail. F/Sgt. OTT reported for duty today. P/O. L.R. SMITH went into hospital from Gazala.

EL MERDUNA

21/12/42

"B" Party left for El Merduna L.G, - past Marble Arch and the pilots joined them there in the evening. Whole area here left heavily mined by the Germans.

22/12/42

No flying today. Air Commodore Broadhurst, DSO, DFC, AFC, SASO W.D. spoke to the pilots today.

23/12/42

Meeting held in S/L MORGAN'S trailer to discuss Christmas arrangements. Three EPIP tents and two ridge tents are being erected to seat all the airmen at one sitting. Christmas fare will consist of tomato soup, turkey, pork with apple sauce, sausage stuffing, Christmas pudding, fruit and nuts, beer and rum and cigarettes. Three mines went off when lorries ran over them today.

24/12/42

Sad news received today that S/Ldr. J.H. WEDGWOOD, DFC had been killed when the Halifax aircraft in which he was a passenger crashed in Malta on its way to U.K. P/O. Turvey returned to the unit today from hospital.

25/12/42

Airmen's tents decorated with sprigs of camel thorn and bunches of desert flowers. Officers and senior NCO's waited on the airmen. In the evening a sing-song was held at which the Commanding Officer and Officers were present. There was a generous supply of beer and the day was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

26/12/42

"A" Party left this morning for a rendezvous past Noflia L.G. and then to continue on their way to the new L.G., which is about 20

miles in the desert South East of Sultan. Another mine went up this morning, once again no-one was injured and the lorry was not harmed. Since staying in the district, which is heavily sprinkled with mines we have lost only one lorry, which hit a mine on the road near Marble Arch. No flying today.

27/12/42

Cold blustering weather which turned into a fine calm in the afternoon. Practice flying carried out all day. Some pork left over from Christmas was purchased from Wing and three welfare boxes were received from the Association of the Ladies of Alexandria. The boxes contained Christmas cakes, handkerchiefs, biscuits, dates, chocolates, Turkish Delight and tins of sweets. This gift to all the squadrons of the advanced Air Force was a most generous and welcomed gift.

28/12/42

F/O. CARPENTER left the unit today to go to a hospital in Cairo. There is some reason to believe that he may not come back. "CHIPS" CARPENTER will be very much missed. He has been with this Squadron for 18 months, and he was an experienced and capable pilot and very much liked in the Squadron. Should he not return to the Squadron we wish him all the very best for the future. Practice flying again today.

29/12/42

No flying today. A football match was played between "A" flight and S.H.Q. ending in a draw 1-all. The Bomb Line is now from

Buerat running S.E. and our forward armoured cars are said to be in the Misurata area.

30/12/42

No flying carried out all day due to aerodrome unserviceability. In the afternoon orders were received from Wing for the Squadron to prepare to move at first light to occupy a more forward L.G. at Adem El Chel. The "A" parties immediately made ready for an early start. F/O. TURVEY was granted seven days sick leave and is leaving for Cairo by air transport tomorrow.

31/12/42

F/Lt. SAIGOL left the Squadron this morning on posting to 22 P.T.C. We are all very sorry to see him go as he has been a regular Adj. and an extremely good campaigner. His health however has been seriously effected by the desert condition and he has been recommended for a change. At 0945 hours the Squadron aircraft took off and set course for the new base at Chel, arriving at 1030 hrs without incident. The ground party left soon after taking the desert track got within 5 miles of Chel before night fall, where they camped. No operational flying carried out and only a few local training flights.

IN THE FIELD TRIPOLITANIA

01/01/43

With no drink and obliged to sleep in the open air "B" party could hardly celebrate the advent of the New Year in the usual

uproarious style. They arrived at CHEL L.G. at 1100 hours looking rather cold! F/O. SCUDDAY was sent to hospital at BENGHAZI after a week of rather indifferent health. During 1942 the Squadron upheld its fine tradition of the past doing stout work throughout from ALAMEIN to the present line. May these traditions continue to be upheld during 1943. Let us hope too that we may pass 1943 in slightly more congenial countryside.

02/01/43

WING COMMANDER DARWIN intends to operate two squadrons together in future and for the practice No. 92 SQUADRON flew with No. 1 SAAF in the SIRTE area while four pilots of No. 145 SQUADRON "played 109's" It was a chance to practice stricter R/T procedure and formation flying at higher speeds than usual. WING COMMANDER DARWIN led a Gazelle shooting expedition of the staff car and jeep, which bagged four without loss. Two went to the airmen.

03/01/43

"A" Party was ordered to move off to a new L.G. just South of TAMET. The L.G has only just been started and the party spent the night on the P. 40 L.G. Five ingenious and hard-working pilots produced a fireplace, which is a welcome addition to the Officer's Mess. During the course of these operations F/O. SLY suffered burns on the face.

04/01/43

A severe sandstorm blew all day. Flying was impossible and most of the tents were flattened – the whole prospect being cold and cheerless. “A” party moved to their new L.G. where there has been considerable enemy air activity.

05/01/43

The sand continues to blow night and day. F/O. BRUCE and Lt. SMITH managed to get away in the morning to collect replacements from AGEDABIA. Three times today “A” Party (at HAMRAT) were bombed by fighter-bombers. No casualties among our own men, though the NEW ZEALANDERS building the L.G. suffered several. The MEDICAL OFFICER, F/Lt. WOOLGROVE, bagged two gazelle which fed the whole of “A” Party.

06/01/43

The wind died down last night and the airmen had a hard day cleaning the aircraft and getting the cannons serviceable. The SPITFIRE for all its merits does not take well to sandstorms. “A” Party was bombed again today, a stick straddling the cookhouse trailer – again fortunately no casualties.

07/01/43

For the first time since ALAMEIN the Squadron met Me 109's in large numbers who were willing to stay and fight, even though they were far from home. These are certainly not the demoralised pilots who moved out of DABA in November. The Squadron was ordered to move forward to HAMRAT to do Readiness. The L.G. was

bombed three times during the course of the day by these elusive customers, the 109 fighter-bombers. On each occasion the Squadron had aircraft in the air. An engagement took place about lunch time in which the COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. J.M. MORGAN, shot down a 109 into the sea and F/O. NOMIS destroyed another. F/Sgt. BROMHALL and Sgt. PATERSON were shot down, though the latter joined the Caterpillar Club and is safe. No news of F/Sgt. BROMHALL. Had the cannons done better our score might have been higher.

08/01/43

Again today the Squadron flew to HAMRAT to do Readiness and Stand-by. The 109 bombers did not succeed in reaching the aerodrome throughout the day. Twice the Squadron engaged Me 109's and MACCHI 202's in force. In the morning F/Lt. CHISHOLM, F/Sgt. SAILS and F/O. DUKE, DFC. destroyed 202's with two probables being claimed. In the evening F/O. NOMIS shot a Me 109 down into the sea after a tough fight with several opponents. Unfortunately GEOFF ROSE has failed to return. The Army report seeing four Spitfires flying along when one turned back and took on eight Me 109's for a quarter of an hour before spinning in. This sounds like Geoff, for his courage, skill and keenness were exemplary. He was a good-hearted fellow and will be missed by everyone. A cinema show at Wing this evening gave the airmen one of their rare and hard-earned outings.

09/01/43

At 1000 hours "B" party moved forward to HAMRAT where "A" Party are established, using the desert track to avoid mines. The stretch of desert in this area is smooth and easy on our hard-working M.T. The new L.G. is not complete as yet and is rather stony. So thoroughly has the enemy mined and ploughed up the aerodromes along the coast, that the Air Force has been obliged to make a set of new L. G's down "in the blue." The water-bowser has broken down and rations are short pro tem. What water we get is even more brackish than at ADEM EL CHEL.

10/01/43

At the present aerodrome the squadrons are being worked hard at Readiness and Stand-by. With only 16 serviceable pilots this means harder work than of late - work which is a welcome relief from the monotony. The Squadron carried out an uneventful, but extremely cold, sweep at 20,000 feet - the only consolation being that the pilots could just see TRIPOLI in the distance!!!

11/01/43

The Squadron had another successful day, destroying two MACCHI 202's and getting a probable 109. This latter was encountered alone on the first sweep of the day, four or five pilots getting in shots. It was awarded to F/Sgt. PROBERT. After lunch an uneventful sweep was carried out, but in the evening the Squadron was scrambled after fighter bombers coming in over TAMET. F/O. DUKE DFC. Celebrated his birthday, by destroying 2 MACCHI

202's. A splendid show! At A.A.H.Q. the COMMANDING OFFICER was given particulars of the coming battle. The 8th Army seem supremely confident.

12/01/43

Most of the Squadron were rudely awakened just after first light by 109's flying low over the dispersal area and the Bofors guns having a field day. However no bombing or strafing was carried out. Just before the weather became too thick for operations a sweep of the forward area was carried out without incident. Several aircraft returned early owing to unserviceability. The difficulties of keeping up the serviceability in the present windy conditions are particularly difficult as we always seem to strike the down-wind end of the aerodrome.

13/01/43

Sandstorms again called operations to a standstill during the middle of the day. During the early morning before the weather thickened the Squadron did a delousing sweep for the Baltimores. Several 109's and 202's were engaged but our guns failed to fire in almost every aircraft that had the opportunity of a shot. Distressing as this is, it is inevitable under the conditions. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE claims a probable - the only claim. Once more a fire is installed in the Officers' Mess thanks to F/O. RAWES.

14/01/43

Three sweeps were carried out. On the last, in the evening, 109's were encountered in one's and two's but avoided combat. Victories

were probably lost again due to guns jamming. The enemy seems to be losing the initiative in the air again. Seldom is he seen on our side of the line and does not show the tenacity of a week ago. CAPTAIN WYNDHAM-SMITH paid the Mess a visit and gave the pilots details of the coming battle which is due to start tonight. Good luck to the 8th Army!

15/01/43

On all three sweeps the Squadron carried out today no enemy aircraft were seen and very few were reported by "Commander." Despite the lull in air activity the ground activity has blazed up again. As planned the 8th ARMY launched their attack last night with TRIPOLI at all costs as their objective. GROUP CAPTAIN CARTER and WING COMMANDER ROSIE paid the Mess a visit this evening.

16/01/43

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR SHOLTO-DOUGLAS paid the Squadron a visit during the morning. Three times the Squadron escorted KITTYHAWKS going out to bomb and strafe. No enemy aircraft were seen and the trips were uneventful except that on the first, two KITTYHAWKS collided and (through a misunderstanding) strafed our own troops instead of the enemy.

17/01/43

The enemy is definitely pulling out again and our troops took BIR DUFAN this morning. "A" Party were ordered to move to BIR DUFAN and left at 1400 hours. One KITTYBOMBER escort was

carried out and one standing patrol was maintained over our forward troops during the afternoon. Long range tanks were put on during last night as the forward troops are now due South of Tripoli and almost out of range.

18/01/43

Six of our aircraft took off this afternoon on an uneventful patrol over the SEDADA area. "A" party are still on the way to the new L.G. and are experiencing rough going through WADI ZEMZEM. An early halt was made and a search instituted for some of the vehicles which have taken the wrong track.

19/01/43

Our aircraft move up from HAMRAIET to the new L.G at WADDI SURRI and arrive before the "A" party, with thoughts of sleeping under their "kites" without blankets. However, No. 145 SQUADRON come to their aid and our pilots sleep comfortably in the Mess of our sister Squadron. "A" Party contacts the missing vehicles near GHEDDAHIA and continue on the move. "B" Party packs up and makes headway along the coast road.

20/01/43

COMMANDING OFFICER HARPER

Pilots, standing around their aircraft, greet "A" Party with derisive cheers as it reaches the L.G. just before noon with three vehicles on tow. Camp is set up in record time on the good site around a natural L.G. Four of our aircraft in sections of two are sent up on

local patrols. Squadron LEADER HARPER is welcomed as our new COMMANDING OFFICER. He has been with us as supernumerary for the past few weeks.

21/01/43

Dawn readiness. No. 92 (EAST INDIA) SQUADRON is the first Squadron to do a daylight sweep from TRIPOLI. Our pilots tell us of the attractions of the City as seen from the air and we speculate as to the day the 8th ARMY will take it. In the afternoon the Squadron, led by WING COMMANDER DARWIN, meet eight Ju 87's engaged in bombing our forward troops. "Hawk-eyed" F/O. NEVILLE DUKE DFC. spotted them from 15 miles away and he claims one destroyed. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE and F/O. JOWSEY shoot down two others in the CASTEL BENITO area and F/O. BAKER and Sgt. PATERSON probably destroy one each. An ARMY signal received within 30 minutes of the Squadron landing confirm the destruction of three STUKAS in the TARHUNA area so it should be possible to obtain confirmation of the probables. This was SAMMY'S last operational trip and it is fitting that he rounds off his tour by adding to his bag.

22/01/43

Squadron is pleased to see NEVILLE DUKE as FLIGHT COMMANDER of "A" FLIGHT in place of F/Lt. SAMOUELLE who becomes O.T.E. Six of our aircraft fly in an offensive patrol over CASTEL BENITO area at 1000 and again at 1100 hours. In the afternoon five more patrolled the TIPOLI-SABRATHA ROAD and six escorted KITTYHAWKS which bombed enemy positions in the

ZUARA area. The bomb line is now drawn to the West of TRIPOLI and we expect our troops to enter soon.

23/01/43

TRIPOLI IS OURS! Several of the pilots air test their guns and find themselves in the city. They report many fires there. At a Mess meeting in the evening F/Lt. PAGE is appointed Bar Officer and P/O. ALLEN takes over the duties of MESS SECRETARY. We talk of ways and means of obtaining supplies of beer and spirits. As if it mattered!

24/01/43

Dawn readiness. Squadron takes off to patrol CASTEL BENITO to cover the landing of HUDSONS bringing up supplies. Three other "stooge" patrols are carried out without incident. Beer and spirits arrive from A.S.P. in time to welcome four new pilots, P/O. WILSON, F/Sgt. FRY. F/Sgt. BRUCKSHAW and F/Sgt. MacFARLAND.

25/01/43

Four of our pilots fly to CASTEL BENITO to operate from there and remain on readiness all day, only two being "scrambled" for an interception patrol in the afternoon. From base, two aircraft escort a WELLINGTON to CASTEL BENITO, returning in time for dinner. SQUADRON LEADER MORGAN flies to TRIPOLI landing between the bomb craters. He is the first member of the Squadron to see the City and he entertains us with a lurid description of the place. How well he shoots the line!

26/01/43

Squadron is released for training and new pilots find no difficulty in becoming "Spit" conscious. F/O. SLY returns from CASTEL BENITO with a Jerry can of CHIANTI wine, which is consumed in the Mess within half-an-hour of "drawing the cork"

27/01/43

No operational flying, and the opportunity is taken of a game of football against a WING side. We avenge our previous defeat by winning 4 - 1. Sgt. PILOT PATERSON featured prominently in the game. Our new ambulance arrives from MARBLE ARCH on tow. F/O. "BABE" WHITAMORE visits the Mess during the evening. More Chianti is disposed of with disastrous effects.

28/01/43

We are not required for operations so pilots busy themselves increasing the comforts of the Mess. The oil fed fire is a roaring success in spite of a rather smoky atmosphere.

29/01/43

Four of our aircraft fly to CASTEL BENITO to operate from there, and two of them are "scrambled" for an uneventful patrol over TRIPOLI harbour. "Wingless Wonders" - DOC. (F/Lt. WOOLGROVE), F/O. RAWES, P/O. BOLLAND and P/O. CORNISH take the C.O.'s "Jeep" to MISURATA and buy vegetables. Belated but very welcome news is received that F/Sgt. BROMHALL - reported missing 7th JAN. - is safe in hospital.

30/01/43

No operational flying and there is talk of leave in CAIRQ for the pilots. At mid-day we are delighted to see P/O. "BRAD" SMITH walk in the Mess, having hitch-hiked from CASTEL BENITO. The last news we had of him was that he was in Hospital in PALESTINE with a fractured spine after baling out on SEPT. 1st at ALAMEIN. No. 1 S.A.A.F. SQUADRON came to our aid and supplied a two-gallon jar of brandy to enliven our farewell party to SQUADRON LEADER MORGAN and FLIGHT LIEUTENANT SAMOUELLE.

31/01/43

This day has been overshadowed by the departure of "MORGY" and "SAMMY." They are two of the original pilots who came overseas with the Squadron. SQUADRON LEADER MORGAN had a carefree, dare-devil spirit, combined with sound common sense which made it a pleasure to serve him on the ground and in the air. This spirit was infectious and under his leadership the squadron has fully maintained its reputation of being one of the most outstanding fighter- squadrons. F/Lt. SAMOUELLE has more than fulfilled expectations, having risen from SERGEANT to FLIGHT COMMANDER within 12 months. His personal score amounts to seven destroyed and four probables and six damaged, and it is a tribute, in itself, to his aggressive spirit against the enemy. The loss will indeed be felt throughout the squadron but we wish them every success in their new sphere. No operational flying today. Arrangements are being made for four pilots to fly to CAIRO tomorrow for a short leave.

01/02/43

No operational flying. F/Lt. CHISHOLM, F/Sgt. SAILS and Sgt. PATERSON were flown to CAIRO for well-earned leave. F/Lt. PAGE, with W/O. SANDERSON and W/O. JENKINS, went to MISURATA to obtain vegetables for the airmen.

02/02/43

Four of our aircraft fly to CASTEL BENITO and, during the day, two of them are "scrambled" for an interception patrol over SABRATHA. No enemy aircraft are seen on this occasion nor later when the other two patrol CASTEL BENITO area. SQUADRON LEADER HARPER issues an invitation to dinner to the Wing Commander, Squadron Commanders and Flight Commanders and we are pleased to entertain , W/Cmdr. GLEED, DSO., DFC, W/Cmdr. DARWEN, DFC and BAR, and CAPTAIN WINDHAM SMITH from 244 WING HEADQUARTERS; MAJOR MOODY, CAPTAIN VILJOEN and Lt. LANGHAM from No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON; S/Ldr. WADE, DFC. and BAR, F/Lt. TAYLOR, F/Lt. HESKETH from No. 145 (E.I.) SQUADRON; and F/Lt. WESTENRA, DFC., and F/O. WHITAMORE (ex 92) from No. 601 SQUADRON. During the evening F/O. SCUDDAY, P/O. LOUIS SMITH and Sgt. McNamara return to us from Hospital bringing a supply of Chianti and whisky with them which played its part in making the party a great success. Music is provided until the early hours of the morning by Sgt. SCROGGIE (piano accordion) and L.A.C. MANN (percussion instruments).

03/02/43

No operational flying, but F/Lt. DUKE, DFC., and P/O. McMAHON fly to CASTEL BENITO to be ready for a "hush-hush" escort job tomorrow. There is a lot of speculation regarding this forthcoming operation. During the afternoon a team of pilots, assisted by the "Doc" (F/Lt. WOOLGROVE) in goal, play and win against the Squadron Armourers. It was good football to watch enlivened by expert barracking from the touchline.

04/02/43

The operation, for which two aircraft flew to CASTEL BENITO yesterday, is cancelled, and the pilots return. In the afternoon S/Ldr. HARPER flies to CASTEL BENITO and, with other Squadron Commanders, is introduced to WINSTON CHURCHILL there. We extend a welcome to two more pilots, SERGEANTS ASKEY and WARREN, who arrive today.

05/02/43

Another day with no operations. Instructions are received for our "A" party to move to CASTEL BENITO tomorrow. We have heard so much about this aerodrome and we look forward to being at our now location with the prospect of living in a building.

06/02/43

At dawn, four of our pilots fly to CASTEL BENITO to do Readiness there, and four times during the day a section of two aircraft are "scrambled" for interception patrols. These patrols are carried out without incident. "A" Party, on its way to the new L.G. arrive at

HOMS, where they park for the night by the sea. Several men take advantage of this by having a swim after dark.

07/02/43

Twelve aircraft set out for CASTEL BENITO to operate from there and run into a severe storm on the way. One pilot is forced to turn back. Two of the aircraft are sent up on an uneventful interception patrol — the "bogey" proved to be friendly. At midday "A" Party arrives at CASTEL BENITO after a very wet journey, and sets up camp. It is decided that the Squadron will not make use of the buildings which are in a filthy condition.

08/02/43

No operational flying. We take stock of the L.G. which is littered with enemy aircraft in various states of disrepair. It is interesting to see our MOSQUITOES and LIGHTNINGS here.

09/02/43

A very dull day with no flying and plenty of rain. At noon, an order to move to EL ASSA is received so Squadron is busy packing up again. During the evening the order is cancelled for twenty-four hours.

10/02/43

No flying all day. Order to move is postponed indefinitely and, accordingly our trucks are unloaded. In the afternoon, a liberty waggon takes 60 men on a visit to TRIPOLI. Twenty men report sick with vomiting and three of them are sent to hospital. It is

suspected that food poisoning has caused this trouble and the "Doc" is kept busy inspecting in the cookhouse.

11/02/43

No more reports from the sick men this morning. They join another party on a visit to TRIPOLI and on returning all are agreed that it is a disappointing place. No operational flying.

12/02/43

Landing ground is unserviceable owing to severe storm which raged throughout last night. Several of our tents and "bivvies" are blown down and flooded and it is impossible to dry blankets because the rain continues all day.

13/02/43

No flying today. We are delighted to hear of the awards to our pilots which are made known today. F/Lt. DUKE and the late S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD gets Bars to their DFC's, and S/Ldr. MORGAN, F/Lt. SAMOUELLE and F/Lt. CHISHOLM received DFC. Additional awards of Bars to their DFC's are also made to F/Lt. SAMOUELLE and F/Lt. CHISHOLM.

14/02/43

Bad weather continues and there is no flying. The Squadron Canteen Issues its own "notes" of 2d., 3d. and 6d. to overcome the lack of small change. Books of these "notes" are sold to personnel at 5s. each and just in time for the sale of TRIPOLI beer!

15/02/43

Dawn readiness for the Squadron at WADI SURRI — now re-named DARRAGH — but they do no flying until late in the afternoon when they are sent to CASTEL BENITO. “B” Party packs up and prepares to move.

16/02/43

There is some training this morning but no operational flying. “B” Party sets off from DARRAGH at dawn and arrives at CASTEL BENITO before dark. It is good to have the Squadron together again after being split up for over a week.

17/02/43

Another quiet day with no flying apart from training flights and air tests of cannons. During the evening SERGEANT PILOT “BUCK” SHAFER - ex 92 Pilot - and LAC. MANN entertained the Squadron in the airmen’s mess. Chianti was liberally distributed at a shilling a pint and we all spent a very enjoyable evening. F/O. SIMPSON, Lt. SMITH, F/O. MacMAHON and F/O. SLY fly to CAIRO for four days leave.

18/02/43

One operational trip only today, but quite an important one. F/Lt. CHISHOLM and F/O. BAKER take off with four other pilots from the WING to provide an escort, the details of which are not yet disclosed. They are expected back tomorrow so perhaps we shall hear about it then.

19/02/43

Our two aircraft return from MALTA this morning, having escorted the A.O.C.-in-C., AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR SHOLTO DOUGLAS on a visit there. There is training flying during the day but no operations.

20/02/43

Three times during the day two of our aircraft were "scrambled" on local interception patrols. In the first operation Controller said that our Section was very near to "Bandit*" which was at 30,000 feet, but 8/10ths cloud at that height obscured it from view. The "bogey" reported in the second operation proved to be friendly, and the third patrol was carried out without incident. We welcome SERGEANT PILOT SYMES who joins the Squadron today.

21/02/43

No operational flying but plenty of training for our new pilots all day. They are anxious to get down to "Ops" and hope that we shall move forward soon.

22/02/43

More training again today, in the afternoon we receive the welcome order to move. We are to start at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning for MEDENIN so our "B" Party is busy packing up.

23/02/43.

"A" Party move off punctually at 0900 hours and reach the TUNISIAN border before resting for the night. At 1500 hours part

of "B" Party is ordered to move to the new landing ground and is instructed to continue through the night. Pilots continue their training programme.

24/02/43

Three times during the day a Section of two of our aircraft are "scrambled" for an interception patrol over TRIPOLI and on each occasion there was no enemy aircraft sighted. The "A" Party arrives at the MEDENIN landing ground — called HASBUB — just an hour before the advance "B" Party and they settle down during the afternoon.

25/02/43

No operational flying. S/Ldr. HARPER flies to the new landing ground and tells us to expect the Squadron tomorrow. The personnel of the forward parties are kept busy digging slit trenches in anticipation of enemy air activity. We are within fifteen miles of the "bomb-line" so must be prepared.

26/02/43

How glad we are that time was spared yesterday for "digging-in"! Our first air raid here occurs at 1100 hours just after No. 145 Squadron aircraft arrive. Eight Me. 109 Fighter-Bombers make a determined attack from 3,000 feet, dropping their H.E. and A.P. load well in the area. Our only casualty is CORPORAL WHITEHEAD, who is sent to No. 21 M.R.S. with head injuries. At 1320 hours four Me 109's dived to 4500 feet but dropped their bombs to the north-west of the landing ground on getting a warm

reception from the guns. In the evening raid, at 1715, we suffered another casualty with head injuries, LAC. SHAW being taken to No. 21 M.R.S. This time five Me 109's bombed the landing ground, but most of their load fell harmlessly on the runways. Our aircraft arrive about 1700 and remain on readiness until dusk but are not sent off.

27/02/43

Activity at last, although it consists mainly of local interception patrols! We do thirty sorties today, but on no occasion is an enemy aircraft sighted. There is only one enemy air raid on this landing ground and we suffer no damage at all, but one of our aircraft and a number of personnel had a lucky escape when an unexploded bomb landed under its port wing.

28/02/43 Dawn readiness is not for us this morning! The Squadron is at thirty minutes until 9 o'clock when four aircraft are called to standby and four to readiness for local interception. Just before 1000 hours four were scrambled but no enemy aircraft was seen. We are told that the Hun has found our "Permanent Echo" here and plotting is very difficult. The rear part of "B" Party arrives from CASTEL BENITO just after noon so the Squadron is once more complete.

01/03/43

We shall remember this day for a long time although there was only one operational trip for us. Five aircraft were scrambled for a local interception patrol of the HASBUB area in the morning and were vectored on to three MACCHI 202's. F/Lt. DUKE, DFC and

BAR shot down two of them, thus being able to avoid the 13th score appearing on his aircraft. At 1700 hours the enemy started to shell the landing ground from the hills South-west of us and it was not long before he was able to get the range of the runway and dispersals. An order was received for all pilots to sit in the cockpit of their aircraft and in this we were fortunate in having six aircraft at "Standby" and another six at "Readiness. Just after 1800 hours, when the sun was going down, all aircraft were told to take off for landing grounds East of us. What a sight it was! Aircraft from three squadrons taking off from two narrow runways missed each other by inches. The ground personnel later received instructions to evacuate the landing ground.

02/03/43

When the ground parties arrived at BEN GARDANE L.G. today they found 14 of our aircraft were already there, having flown from other landing grounds this morning. Many were the tales we heard of superb night landings made last night with the aid of emergency flare paths. Only one aircraft crashed and that was in taxing after a successful landing. We carried out two local interception patrols today without incident — the first with six aircraft and the other with two.

03/03/43

F/Lt. DUKE DFC. And BAR, added another to his score on the first show this morning when three of our pilots gave independent top cover to aircraft of 145 SQUADRON "delousing" in the OUDREF AREA. His score is now 15 destroyed. Later in the morning we

again operated with 145 SQUADRON in a sweep of the forward areas but no enemy aircraft were seen. Six of our Squadron were in a WING sweep of the GABES area in the afternoon but nothing, apart from heavy ack-ack was reported. We were very pleased to welcome F/Lt. HUMPHREYS who has joined the Squadron today.

04/03/43

F/Lt. DUKE'S day again today! In a local interception patrol, when eight of our aircraft encountered two Me 109's escorting three or four Me 109 fighter-bombers engaged in bombing HASBUB L.G., he destroyed both of them. His score is now 17 confirmed — he has destroyed 5 enemy aircraft in the last four days. This was the sole operation of the day.

05/03/43

We suffered a sad loss this morning in the only operational trip of the day. Four aircraft were providing independent top cover to No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON when they were attacked out of the clouds by seven Me 109's. A dog-fight followed lasting for 15 minutes, but our pilots had no success. FLYING OFFICER ("HAPPY") MacMAHON did not return and we heard later that he had crashed and been killed. Late this evening we received orders to move to HASBUB again tomorrow morning.

06/03/43

At 0600 hours this morning the enemy began a small offensive on this front and consequently all orders to move forward were cancelled. We carried out two offensive sweeps over the battle

area. The first trip was uneventful and in the second our only interception was of “bogies” which proved to be HURRICANES. Interesting reports were received from the pilots of ground activity and later in the day we heard officially that 30 enemy tanks had been knocked out without our armour being engaged.

07/03/43

Today has been a very busy day for us. Forty-four sorties in all — the first at 0710 hours and the last at 1720 — and what great work our pilots have done! Without any loss to ourselves, five enemy aircraft were destroyed, three probably destroyed, and four damaged. F/Lt. DUKE DFC. and BAR brought his personal score to 19 destroyed and the Squadron bag now tops 250 destroyed. The total of the Squadron's score now stands at 254½ destroyed, 101 probably destroyed and 134 damaged. The ground crews did magnificent work keeping up the serviceability throughout the day and tribute must be paid to them in addition to the pilots for such a grand day's performance. The other scorers were;- F/Lt. CHISHOLM DFC and BAR, 1 destroyed, 1 probable and 1 damaged. Sgt. ASKEY, 1 destroyed. F/O. SLY, 1 probable. F/Sgt. SAILS, 1 probable. F/O. JOWSEY, 1 damaged, F/Sgt. PATERSON, 2 damaged.

08/03/43

In the five operations carried out today we have seen very few enemy aircraft. F/Lt. HUMPHREYS and P/O. WILSON both attacked F/W 190's — encountered for the first time on this front — but their cannons jammed and they saw no results from machine-

gun fire. With everything right forward and the “tit” pressed they were unable to keep up with the enemy aircraft which pulled away from them easily at 14,000 feet. We congratulate a former 92 pilot who has just been awarded the DSO. He is SQUADRON LEADER D.E. KINGABY, DFM and 2 BARS, who left on obtaining a Commission in October, 1941.

09/03/43

Six of our aircraft flew to HASBUB SATELLITE L.G. at dawn this morning and were scrambled from there for an uneventful patrol. They landed at BEN GARDANE and another six went to take their place at the forward base. Another patrol was carried out in which two Me 109's were spotted but were lost in the haze. These pilots had instructions to remain overnight and were joined by six more just before dusk. The Squadron was ordered to move to the HASBUB L.G. at first light next morning.

10/03/43

The Squadron arrived at HASBUB L.G. just before mid-day and heard a thrilling tale of five of our pilots who had been led by the WING COMMANDER in an escort to HURRICANE “TANK-BUSTERS” The “L” FORCE of the FREE FRENCH had been attacked by the enemy and were saved by the work of the HURRICANES which destroyed many enemy armoured vehicles and M.T., besides a couple of tanks. A message of congratulations was received from GENERAL LE CLERC, the OFFICER COMMANDING of “L” FORCE. Four other operations carried out seemed dull after this grand effort. Squadron personnel, after

lunch, were sent to another L.G. by the coast at BU GRARA and they arrived there in a short time to receive the aircraft. We welcome two new pilots - SERGEANTS T.E. BRISTER and J.W. IVES.

11/03/43

A fairly quiet day with no joy for us on our two operational trips. Although a few HUNS were reported, none were seen. P/O. BRICKHILL and F/O. BRUCE returned from leave today with the news that each had been promoted. Besides having an additional ring F/Lt. BRUCE had also had a haircut!

12/03/43

Only one show all day! In it we escorted a formation of BOSTONS to the forward areas but only one of our pilots saw an enemy aircraft. He, W/O. PROBERT became separated from the Squadron and was bounced by three Me 109's over MARET. He dived with them all the way to base where he landed safely. F/Lt. DUKE DFC and BAR, F/Lt. CHISHOLM DFC and BAR, and F/Lt. HUMPHREYS were entertained by No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON tonight.

13/03/43

Two trips today, one an escort to KITTYHAWKS and the other involving six aircraft scrambled to augment the escorting section when they were engaged with Me 109's. In the scrap, F/O. SIMPSON destroyed a Me 109, and both F/O. SAVAGE and F/O. BAKER damaged one. We congratulate F/Lt. E.A.G.C. BRUCE on taking over command of "B" Flight in place of F/Lt. W.L.

CHISHOLM DFC and BAR, who has completed a most successful tour. In the evening when the Sergeants are being entertained by the Pilot's Mess, F/Lt. DUKE makes an announcement which is greeted by prolonged cheers. It is that the Squadron is shortly to be equipped with SPITFIRE IX's. We learn today of a tribute to our late COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. J.H. WEDGWOOD, DFC and BAR, by RICHARD CAPELL writing in the "DAILY TELEGRAPH" of 17th February, 1943. He said: " I can mention some of its gallant leaders — Wedgwood, that crack Spitfire Commander so unmistakeably a born leader of men and as authoritative as lion-hearted..... Grievous to relate, S/Ldr. Wedgwood, that knightly commander, was killed flying back to England, his tour done."

14/03/43

The only operation of the day was carried out without incident although it added one hour and 20 minutes to six pilots' log books. A very happy evening was spent with WING COMMANDER GLEED, DSO. DFC., and MAJOR MOODY DFC., and several pilots from No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON as guests.

15/03/43

Although the Squadron got many Stand-by hours in today, the aircraft did not take off for any operational trip. Our COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. HARPER returned from CAIRO where he had been attending a course.

16/03/43

Before breakfast a section of four aircraft was scrambled for an uneventful patrol and no further operations were carried out. A representative of PATHE GAZETTE took some "shots" of our pilots, including one of F/Lt. DUKE DFC. and BAR in his aircraft marked with his score of 19 destroyed. The film will be on view in ENGLAND during the next month.

17/03/43

Both F/Lt. BRUCE and F/Lt. HUMPHREYS added a damaged Me 109 to their score in the first trip today which was an interception patrol. The Squadron with 12 aircraft encountered 12 Me 109 fighter-bombers with a cover of six plus Me 109's and three MACCHI 202's. Unfortunately a Mc 202 got on F/O. BRICKHILL'S tail, scored hits in his mainplane which exploded his ammunition and he was forced to bale out. So far it has been impossible to get any definite news of him, but one report says he is safe in an M.R.S. The second patrol today was carried out without incident.

18/03/43

Very bad weather caused the cancellation of operations laid on for us today, and although the Squadron was at Stand-by for several hours, our aircraft did not take off. No definite news about F/O. BRICKHILL today, but a signal is received from army sources which reads "Friend says pilot safe but not on our side" and it may refer to him or to another pilot in the Wing who baled out on the same day.

19/03/43

A strong North wind has been blowing all day and there has been 10/10^{ths} cloud as low as 15,000 feet which has curtailed offensive operations. Early in the morning two of our pilots carried out a weather recce over the forward areas and later on two interception patrols were carried out but no enemy aircraft were seen. In the evening CAPTAIN HEFFORD — who has returned to the WING as A.L.O. — and F/O. HALES were entertained in the Pilot's Mess.

20/03/43

WING COMMANDER GLEED, DSO., DFC., and S/Ldr. OLVER, DFC., flew with the Squadron today escorting KITTYHAWKS bombing at EL HAMMA. Not one enemy aircraft was seen. Our aircraft were at Stand-by for several hours during the day in anticipation of "STUKA" raids on the NEW ZEALAND troops, but no further operations were carried out. A few days ago some of our pilots bought some ducks and they have kept them in a pen near the Mess. Today a notice appeared in D.R.O's which read:- "The undermentioned officer has been appointed Poultry Officer w.e.f. 18th March, 1943. all personnel interested in Big Game are to submit their names to the Officer i/c Poultry forthwith — F/O. SLY, P.K.U." !! What we are really interested in is when they will be fat enough to appear on the table.

21/03/43

No enemy aircraft were seen on the two operational trips today. Most of the time was spent by the Squadron intercepting friendly aircraft.

22/03/43

The Squadron escorted "TANK-BUSTER" HURRICANES in a most interesting operation this afternoon. The NEW ZEALAND FORCES who have outflanked the MARETH LINE were about to be attacked by enemy armour but the HURRICANES inflicted heavy damage on tanks, armoured cars and other vehicles and 1,500 prisoners were taken by the "KIWI'S"

23/03/43

Before dawn today, F/Lt. DUKE DFC., and BAR, F/O. JOWSEY, P/O. WILSON and F/O. PROBERT flew to ALGIERS to collect four Spitfire IX's for the Squadron. They arrived back — delighted with the performance of the new aircraft — before dinner. Thirty-six sorties were carried out by the Squadron today, but, although in one operation several pilots fired, no claims were made. There was an amusing incident over the HUN L.G. at GABES when F/O. SAVAGE was on the tail of a 109 about to land there. The Hun, apparently thinking our pilot intended to land with his wheels up, fired a red Veray light at him! The windscreens on F/Lt. HUMPHREYS' and W/O. FRY'S aircraft iced up when, diving to deck level from 20,000 feet, they attacked a F/W 190 and Me 109

respectively and they were unable to observe results from their fire.

24/03/43

It was an impressive sight when the Squadron and 601 Squadron gave close cover this morning to three Squadrons of KITTYHAWKS and a Squadron of HURRICANE "TANK-BUSTERS" attacking enemy transport and armoured vehicles in the EL HAMMA area. In the second operation of the day, F/Lt. BRUCE was forced to return owing to engine trouble and this gave F/O. BAKER his first opportunity to lead the Squadron formation. No enemy aircraft were seen but the capability of F/O. BAKER as a leader was evident in his handling of the formation over the intense "flak" the enemy put up.

25/03/43

A total of 33 sorties were carried out today, including 11 with the new SPITFIRE IX's. In the second operation several pilots fired at a JU 88 which they encountered, but F/Lt. DUKE was the only one to observe results of his attack. He set the enemy's port engine on fire and claims a damaged. It is announced that the DFC has been awarded to LIEUTENANT S. RABIE, SAAF. He left this Squadron on December 11th last year after completing a tour in which he excelled himself as "Professional No. 2" to S/Ldr. WEDGWOOD. Grand show, Bill!

26/03/43

F/Lt. P.H. HUMPHREYS has been appointed FLIGHT COMMANDER of "B" FLIGHT in place of F/Lt. BRUCE, who was injured yesterday when his plane crashed on return from an operational flight. In the four operations today not once was an enemy aircraft encountered. From 1500 to 1800 hours the Squadrons of this WING did a record number of sorties — 72 — covering KITTYHAWKS who spent the afternoon bombing and strafing enemy transport and armour. The A.O.C. sent a signal congratulating everyone on "a magnificent performance"

27/03/43

Soon after dawn this morning a telephone call came through to F/Lt. NEVILLE DUKE at Dispersal from the A.O.C. with the grand news that an award of the DSO had been made to him. A well-earned "gong" is the Squadron's opinion. During the first week of the month, while acting Squadron Commander during S/Ldr. HARPER'S absence, "NEVILLE" destroyed seven enemy aircraft bringing his total bag to 19 destroyed, four probably destroyed and three damaged. The Squadron undertook three operations today. In the first one F/O. BRADLEY SMITH had a lucky escape when his aircraft received a direct hit from BREDA fire — he was able to coax it back to base. We suffered a sad loss in the third trip when one Me 109 flew straight down through one of our sections and F/Sgt. SAILS was seen to go into a spin — probably hit — over the enemy lines. He has not yet returned and it is feared that it was his aircraft which was seen burning on the ground.

28/03/43

There was only one operation, involving a section of six aircraft, for us today and no enemy aircraft were seen. For the first time since we were at CASTEL BENITO there was a supply of half-a-pint of beer for the airmen. The Pilot's Mess drew lots for eight bottles which was its quota. It is hard to understand why the N.A.A.F.I has not made an effort to get supplies to the forward Wings more regularly.

29/03/43

A much busier day for us and once again F/Lt. DUKE, DSO., DFC. and BAR, added to his bag bringing his total to 20 destroyed. F/O. SAVAGE also brought down a 109 and F/O. BRADLEY SMITH damaged one. In all, we carried out 40 sorties in the SFAX area. The 8th ARMY got through the MARETH LINE and GABES is reported to be in our hands already. Our Medical Officer, F/Lt. WOOLGROVE, had an interesting experience when he went out in a motor boat to an Air Sea Rescue off DJERBA ISLAND today. The launch had been bombed and strafed ten miles off SFAX after it rescued a pilot who had been in the sea for five hours. At the end of the day our scoreboard showed a full total of 498½ and we hope that we shall reach the 500 mark tomorrow.

30/03/43

Our hopes expressed yesterday were realised just after noon today when F/O. SLY probably destroyed a Me 109, F/Lt. HUMPHREYS damaged a Me 210 and F/O. SIMPSON damaged a Me 109,

bringing the full total to 501½. In this operation our Squadron spotted 12 210's escorted by 18 plus Me 109's and went into the attack, forcing the enemy bombers to drop their bombs in their own territory near CEKHIRA. There were three other trips but no enemy aircraft were sighted.

31/03/43

In the first operation today we "deloused" for two squadrons of KITTYHAWKS and 18 MITCHELLS over SFAX but no enemy forces appeared to add interest to our part of the job. Again, in the afternoon, during the only other operation, there was no sign of "Jerry" although a few were reported by the Controller. This month has added 13 destroyed, four Probables, and 12 Damaged to our score.

BU GRARA, TUNISIA

01/04/43

Out total sorties amounted to six only today. There was no sign of the enemy when four of our Spitfire IX's with aircraft of No. 1 SAAF and 145 Squadrons deloused for MITCHELLS and KITTYHAWKS over the SFAX area, and later in the day the weather was too bad for further bombing operations; two of our aircraft reported low cloud covering the area when on a weather reconnaissance.

02/04/43

This was a much busier day. Four times a section of six were scrambled for interception patrols but on no occasion was the enemy seen. The Squadron, with four Spitfire IX's and eight Spitfire V's, gave independent cover to KITTYHAWKS which bombed M.T. west of CEKHIRA this afternoon, but nothing turned up to upset the operation.

03/04/43

It was just as well that there was only one operation today because several pilots have had a bout of "Gypsy tummy." The "DOC" has expressed his considered opinion that our water supply has caused this trouble, and he has the matter in hand. Our six aircraft which took off on an interception patrol were unable to fly inland in the SFAX area because of cloud at 1,000 feet over the area. A supply of TRIPOLI beer arrived and each man was allowed a half-pint. There have been no reports that anyone was unable to cope with this quantity.

04/04/43

The Squadron was released for the day and several pilots spent the day on DJERBA ISLAND, while others visited ZARZIS. In the afternoon we were asked to come to readiness but the only pilots available were four still suffering from internal trouble.

05/04/43

We expected a busy day but there was only one operation and that was when six aircraft were scrambled for an interception North of

GABES. The only aircraft intercepted proved to be SPITFIRES of 145 SQUADRON!

06/04/43

All records for the number of sorties flown in any one day were broken by the WING today when a total of 247 was reached. From early morning till dusk continuous patrols were maintained over the battle area. There was little sign of the enemy until the afternoon, although the COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. W.J. HARPER, got a "squirt" at a Me 109 in the morning. The enemy aircraft dived vertically, apparently out of control, but no claim was made. WING COMMANDER GLEED, DSO., DFC., damaged a Me 109, when leading our formation in a patrol later in the afternoon, but our pilots were unable to get within range.

07/04/43

The patrols over the enemy side of the battle area were continued all day today, and once again the enemy put up little opposition to our effort. Our pilots brought back valuable information, regarding HUN troop movements, which kept the Light Bombers and Fighter-bombers busy.

08/04/43

Our "A" Party was instructed to be on the move by mid-day and to report at ADVANCED GROUP H.G. for routeing instructions. They arrived there before dusk and were told to be ready to move on a minute's notice, but no further instructions were received. The Squadron carried out 34 sorties today at MAHARES —

MEZZOUNA area. On two operations enemy aircraft were seen but the combats in each case were inconclusive. F/Lt. HUMPHREYS had an argument with the GROUND CONTROLLER regarding the identity of an aircraft he had attacked. While he was convinced that it was a Me 109, the Controller was positive that it was a F/W 190.

09/04/43

Six aircraft escorted KITTYHAWKS which attacked shipping in SFAX harbour this morning, but there were no further operations. Meanwhile, the "A" Party remained near ADVANCED GROUP H.Q. without news until late in the evening when they were instructed to move at first light next morning to CECKIRA.

10/04/43

At dawn, a section gave independent top cover to KITTYHAWKS on an armed reconnaissance in the EL DJEM area. No enemy aircraft were reported or seen. At CEKHIRA, the "A" Party found Squadrons of 79 FIGHTER GROUP setting up camp so they remained packed up awaiting further instructions. It was almost 2200 hours before any were received so it was decided to move to the new landing ground before breakfast next morning.

LA FANCONNERIE

11/04/43

Before noon, camp was set up by the "A" Party at LA FANCONNERIE L.G. and the aircraft arrived in the afternoon. No operations all day.

BU GRARA

12/04/43

"B" Party moved up to H.Q. No. 211 GROUP for instructions and remained for the night in the vicinity. Once again, we were not called on for operations.

LA FANCONNERIE

13/04/43

After two days rest our pilots were pleased to get "off the deck" today. An interception patrol in the morning was uneventful and no enemy aircraft were seen either by them or later in the day when we gave cover to two squadrons of No. 7 SAAF WING in an offensive sweep of the forward areas. Before noon the "B" Party arrived at BOU GOUBRINE but the landing ground had not been prepared so they set up camp on a hill overlooking the site.

14/04/43

Two offensive patrols were carried out today — the first by four Spitfire IX's and the other by four Spitfire IX's and six V's. In the

second operation two Me 109's dived at high speed past the starboard section but their speed prevented interception.

BOU GOUBRINE

15/04/43

The "A" party moved up to join the rest of the Squadron at BOU GOUBRINE after the aircraft left this morning. Packing up had been delayed slightly when six pilots took off for an offensive sweep, but the Squadron was complete again just after noon at the new landing ground.

16/04/43

Two new SERGEANT PILOTS joined us today, they are Sgts. SAVILL and PERCIVAL. They arrive in time to see five enemy aircraft destroyed added to our total score. When three of our SPITFIRE IX's gave top cover to 145 SQUADRON on a sweep to CAPE BON, 18 S.M. 82's were spotted flying low over the sea and F/Lt. DUKE, DSO, DFC and BAR, led the attack, destroying two himself, while F/O. T. SAVAGE got another two "flamers" and P/O. G. WILSON added the fifth. F/Lt. DUKE was attacked by six plus Me 109's, but by brilliant evasive action got home without one hole in his aircraft. There were 24 sorties in all, but no more enemy aircraft were seen.

17/04/43

There have been many promotions in the Squadron recently which have not been recorded so it may be well to give a list of pilots and

officers now with us. Our COMMANDING OFFICER is S/Ldr. W.J. HARPER. And the FLIGHT COMMANDERS are F/Lt. N.F. DUKE, DSO, DFC, and BAR, and F/Lt. HUMPHREYS. The following pilots are operational;- F/O. E. SLY, F/O. B.D. BAKER, F/O. T. SAVAGE, F/O. M. JOWSEY, P/O. G. WILSON, P/O. H. PATERSON, W/O. S. FRY, F/Sgt. L. MacKAY, F/Sgt. P. INCHCOMBE, F/Sgt. M. ASKEY and Sgt. P.E. BRISTER in "A" FLIGHT, and F/O. D. TURVEY, F/O. K. SIMPSON, F/Lt. M. JACKSON, F/O. BRADLEY-SMITH, P/O. W. BRUCKSHAW, P/O. R. MacFARLANE, P/O. R. PROBERT, Lt. A. SACHS, F/ Sgt. F. SYMES, F/Sgt. W. IVES, F/Sgt. K. WARREN, F/Sgt. MacNAMARA, Sgt. G. BUCHANAN, F/Sgt. H.G. JOHNSON in "B" FLIGHT. Our ADJUTANT is F/Lt. L.M. PAGE and the other "Penguins" are F/Lt. C.G. WOOLGROVE ("DOC"), F/O. J. RAWES (ENGINEER OFFICER), F/O. G.J. CORNISH (INTELLIGENCE OFFICER) and P/O. ALLEN (EQUIPMENT OFFICER). May this team soon see TUNIS in our hands! We have carried out two sweeps over the CAPE BON PENINSULA today. The first one with No. 1 SAAF and 145 SQUADRONS and the second covering two Squadrons of KITTYHAWKS. There was no sign of the enemy in the air, but reports were made of a little shipping activity. In the evening MAJOR MOODY, DFC., and several pilots from No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON visited us and we spent a very happy time with their company in spite of the fact that the only liquor available was lemon juice. F/Lt. a. GLENDINNING, a former pilot with this Squadron, has been awarded a well-deserved DFC., and we offer him our sincere and hearty congratulations.

18/04/43

Soon after dawn our Squadron escorted KITTYHAWKS of No. 7 SAAF Wing on an offensive sweep of the CAPE BON PENINSULA which passed off uneventfully and during the morning a section of six aircraft carried out an interception patrol without meeting any enemy aircraft. It was a late sweep of the CAPE BON PENINSULA that provided the excitement of the day. We gave escort and top cover to four Squadrons of KITTYHAWKS and that in itself was an impressive sight but when they were near RASO EL AHMAR large numbers of enemy transport planes were spotted flying low to the North-east with a close escort of fighters. The KITTYHAWKS "waded in" to the enemy aircraft while we covered them. The only enemy aircraft seen above the KITTYHAWKS were one Me 109, which F/Lt. DUKE chased out to sea until his cannons jammed, and one Mc 202, which F/O. M. JOWSEY shot down into the sea. The KITTYHAWKS got the amazing score of 58 Ju 52's, 14 Me 109's and two Me 110's destroyed, a Ju 52 and a Me 109 probably destroyed, and 11 Ju 52's, six Me 109's and one Me 110 damaged. Their leader thanked our Squadron for the successful cover they gave them and said that it was due to the knowledge that they would not be attacked from above that they were able to amass such a grand score.

19/04/43

This was a day after our pilots' hearts because each operation was a show which had been laid on in advance with only a short period of Stand-by before they took off. The first formation of ten aircraft

were off at 0630 hours and they escorted and gave top cover to KITTYHAWKS in an offensive sweep of CAPE BON PENINSULA with the intention of intercepting more enemy transport aircraft. We were out of luck, however, and there was no sign of the enemy in the air. In the afternoon, three more sweeps were carried out with large formations of KITTYHAWKS, but again no enemy aircraft were seen. It has been announced during the past 24 hours a total of 96 enemy planes have been destroyed on this front.

20/04/43

F/Sgt. M. ASKEY was our outstanding pilot today — he claimed three Mc 202's destroyed while F/O. SLY and F/O. BAKER destroyed two more Mc 202's between them. W/O. FRY and Sgt. BRISTER damaged one Mc 202 each. The first two operations were escort and top cover to KITTYHAWKS over CAPE BON PENINSULA, and it was in the first of these that F/O. SLY and F/Sgt. ASKEY disposed of two out of three enemy aircraft encountered. Just after mid-day, there was a Wing Offensive Sweep EAST OF KELIBIA and our Squadron spotted a "gaggle" of 12 plus Me 109's and Mc 202's about 1,000 feet above them. We attacked with the splendid result of three Mc 202's claimed as destroyed and two damaged. In the last trip of the day, four of our SPITFIRE IX's gave top cover to No. 1 SAAF escorting HURRICANE "TANK-BUSTERS" but no suitable targets were found. F/O. JOWSEY chased a lone Me 109 to REYVILLE but he was unable to close to more than 600 yards and he makes no claim. Our C.O., S/Ldr. W.J. HARPER, several pilots and our ENGINEER OFFICER, F/O.

RAWES, spent an exceedingly happy evening with No. 1 SAAF Squadron, while others celebrated the Squadron's success at F/Sgt. ASKEY'S expense in our own mess.

21/04/43

After the intensive operations of the last few days we reached an anti-climax today when the Squadron sat in their cockpits on Stand-by for three hours in the hot sun without being sent off at all. The only operation was a weather reconnaissance carried out by two aircraft over KORBA. In the evening S/Ldr. HARPER, F/Lt. PAGE, our ADJUTANT, and F/O. J. RAWES, the ENGINEER OFFICER, were entertained at the WING OFFICERS' MESS where beer flowed freely and a happy time was had by all. F/O. F WIHAK joined us today on posting from 238 SQUADRON.

22/04/43

The Squadron did an hour and a half Stand-by before taking off to escort KITTYHAWKS on an offensive sweep over the GULF OF TUNIS. We were unfortunate in not encountering any enemy aircraft because other SPITFIRES from our WING with KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING and 7 SAAF WING ran into a large formation of Me 323's escorted by Me 109's and Mc 202's and destroyed 25 of the six-engine transport planes together with seven Me 109's. In the late afternoon 14 of our pilots were on Stand-by for another hour and a half, but did not take off. We are now without supplies of beer, spirits or cigarettes, but have hopes that the N.A.A.F.I. will come to our aid before long.

23/04/43

There was no sign of the HUN during our three shows today. Two of the “ops” were delousing jobs for bombers who attacked enemy gun positions in the forward areas and the other was a close escort to KITTYHAWKS on a sweep of the GULF OF TUNIS. F/O. L.R.G SMITH — now O.T.E. — left us today on posting to A.D.U., and with him went F/Sgt. MacNAMARA, who is to report to 238 SQUADRON. We are sorry to see them go. We were delighted to read a letter addressed to “DOC” WOOLGROVE from our grand old “ADJ” McGOWAN. He is in SCOTLAND but misses the boys from 92. F/O. TRAVIS reported today to take over the duties of adjutant from F/Lt. PAGE.

24/03/43

Rather a quiet day. Two pilots took off at dawn to patrol over a convoy nearing SFAX harbour and later in the morning our two FLIGHT COMMANDERS went up to attempt an interception of an enemy recce plane but they had no luck. The Squadron escorted four Squadrons of KITTYHAWKS just after mid-day on a bombing operation in the ENFIDAVILLE area but no enemy aircraft were seen. Two cuttings from English newspapers have arrived out here referring to the award of the DSO., to F/Lt. DUKE. One from the “SUNDAY EXPRESS” dated 27th, March, 1943, says:- “HALF-PLANE OFF RECORD — GETS DSO. - A RAF pilot who is half a plane short of the record “bag” for the MIDDLE EAST, has just been awarded the DSO. — but he is now operating against the JAPANESE in the PACIFIC. (Note. Where the hell did they get that

yarn!!!) He is ACTING FLIGHT LIEUTENANT NEVILLE FREDERICK DUKE, who already has a bar to his DFC., and who has already destroyed 19 aircraft." The other cutting is from the "TONBRIDGE COURIER" dated 2nd APRIL, 1943, and reads:- "ACE TRIUMPHS AGAIN. Readers will learn with pride and interest that FLIGHT LIEUTENANT NEVILLE F. DUKE, of TONBRIDGE, has now been awarded the DSO., his third distinction in less than 18 months. F/Lt. DUKE, who is the son of Mr. and MRS. F.H. DUKE, of 82, HADLOW ROAD, TONBRIDGE, was awarded the DFC., last year, and we recently reported that he had received his BAR. With his latest award this intrepid officer has now brought his score up to 19½, the final plane being "shared" with another pilot. The latest distinction, contained in a Press cablegram from CAIRO, was probably for seven "kills" in one week."

25/04/43

Forty-four sorties were carried out today but the HUN did not show himself at all. In the first "Op" we gave independent cover to 36 BALTIMORES and 32 KITTYHAWKS which attacked a target North of ENFIDAVILLE. It was the second trip which provided the excitement of the day when we carried out a sweep of the GULF OF TUNIS with three squadrons of KITTYHAWKS. Although no enemy aircraft appeared, the enemy showed his unfriendliness by sending up intensive Ack-Ack from RASS EL FORTASS area, scoring a hit on P/O. R. PROBERT'S SPITFIRE IX. He was forced to bale out when ten miles East of KORBA, but was reported to be safe in his dinghy when the Squadron left him. Six of our aircraft

later escorted the intrepid pilot of the WALRUS to the position and picked him up safe and sound. He had spent two and a quarter hours paddling around in his dinghy, but his only complaint was that he had lost one shoe of a pair he had bought only the previous day. The COMMANDING OFFICER and three others carried out a reconnaissance of the SOLIMAN landing Grounds in preparation for an attack by 54 Light Bombers and six Squadrons of KITTYHAWKS in the late afternoon for which we provided independent cover. At night we entertained F/O. HALES and the WALRUS pilot who had rescued P/O. PROBERT.

26/04/43

In thick mist, F/Lt. DUKE took off at dawn to do a recce of the SOLIMAN area and GULF OF TUNIS. The weather was too bad for him to land here so he had breakfast with friends of 450 SQUADRON at KAIROUAN. It had cleared a little when F/O. TURVEY and W/O. FRY carried out another recce of the same area, but they also reported the weather unsuitable for bombing operations. A target just North of ENFIDAVILLE was attacked at mid-day by BALTIMORES and KITTYHAWKS, to which we provided independent cover. In the afternoon we did two sweeps of the SOLIMAN and CAPE BON areas but no enemy aircraft were encountered. Rather an uneventful and quiet day.

27/04/43

Cloud covered enemy territory at heights varying from 6,000 to 23,000 feet during today's operations. A standing patrol was maintained throughout the morning by our Wing over GROMBALIA

area and we contributed 14 sorties to this operation without encountering the enemy. Nine plus Me 109's were seen during an interception patrol by the Squadron in the afternoon, but the enemy aircraft were very anxious not to engage in combat and found sanctuary in the clouds. Both F/Lt. P.H. HUMPHREYS and F/O. BRADLEY SMITH fired, but they were unable to observe results of their attacks. SERGEANT PILOTS LAWSON, ALLEN and RATCLIFF joined us today on posting from 244 WING TRAINING FLIGHT.

28/04/43

Very little doing for us today. In the morning S/Ldr. OLVER, of 244 WING, and three of our pilots carried out an offensive sweep of the CAPE BON area, but there were no enemy aircraft about. F/O. TURVEY was leading a section of eight, later in the morning, as cover to three Squadrons of KITTYHAWKS and two Squadrons of special HURRICANES, but when they reached the rendezvous they were told that the operation had been cancelled. Two Mc 202's were destroyed and a Me 109G damaged in a delousing operation by four of our SPITFIRE IX's, led by F/O. SAVAGE, in the afternoon. They met ten plus enemy aircraft, but several of them climbed away, on sight of our planes, into cloud. F/Sgt. ASKEY added a destroyed to his score which now stands at five confirmed, and W/O. Fry destroyed the other. F/O. SAVAGE severely damaged the 109 whose undercarriage dropped, but it was able to climb away slowly into cloud pouring volumes of white smoke. Our Squadron score is now 270½ destroyed, 102 probably destroyed

and 145 damaged. The “bag” since we arrived in the MIDDLE EAST is 77 — 21 — 87.

29/04/43

Three operations were carried out today in connection with anti-shipping patrols by KITTYHAWKS in the CAPE BON area. In the first “show” 12 of our aircraft escorted three Squadrons of 239 WING but no enemy aircraft were seen. Later, four of our SPITFIRE IX’s deloused for KITTYHAWKS and encountered three Mc. 202’s. Both P/O. PATERSON — who led the formation after the leader was forced to return with engine trouble — and P/O. WILSON fired as they followed the enemy aircraft in a dive. Our pilots recorded 450 m.p.h. in their dive but lost the MACCHIS at 2,000 feet. We were more fortunate in our last operation of the day when 12 of our aircraft escorted four Squadrons of 79 PURSUIT GROUP. We were attacked by 12 plus Me 109’s, Mc 202’s and F/W 190’s and Lt. SACHS damaged a Me 109. Five other pilots fired at several aircraft each and a parachute was seen at 10,000 feet over CAPE BON. We are claiming an unidentified aircraft destroyed and await the result of the combat films because no pilot will put forward an individual claim for it.

30/04/43

After viewing yesterday’s combat films it was decided that the aircraft destroyed yesterday should be credited to F/O. D.L.G. TURVEY. Our six operations today have all been in connection with anti-shipping patrols by KITTYHAWKS. During the last show we were attacked by three Mc 202’s and later another nine Me 109’s

and Mc 202's joined in the fight which took place in and out of the cloud. This cloud prevented full observation of results but P/O. MACFARLANE, Lt. SACHS and F/O. BRADLEY SMITH each damaged a Mc 202. We suffered no loss. This month we have carried out 581 sorties with a total of 841 hours 40 minutes operational flying time. F/Lt. L.M. PAGE left us today and F/O. G.L. TRAVIS has taken over the duties of SQUADRON ADJUTANT.

01/05/43

One of our spitfire IX's has been named "India Print and Paper" at the request of THE EAST INDIA FUND FOR BRITISH SERVICES who presented the aircraft to the Squadron. Today we have flown 36 sorties in support of anti-shipping patrols by the KITTTYHAWK WINGS. In the operation just after mid-day we regret to say that F/Sgt. P. INCHCOMBE was forced to bale out owing to engine trouble and his body was found by the ARMY in the forward areas. Not once were enemy aircraft encountered throughout the day.

02/05/43

We heard today that F/O. P. BRICKHILL, who was reported missing on 17th March, is a prisoner-of-war in GERMANY. Soon after dawn a section of six aircraft carried out a shipping patrol in the GULF OF HAMMAMET and later in the morning we did an offensive patrol in the GULF OF TUNIS with four SPITFIRS IX's. On these trips and in the third operation of the morning — when we escorted KITTTYHAWKS on an anti-shipping patrol in the CAP BON area — there was no sign of the LUFTWAFFE. We congratulate S/Ldr. P. OLVER, D.F.C., who has been appointed

WING COMMANDER to 244 WING in place of W/Cmdr. GLEED, who was reported missing on 16th April.

03/05/43

A fairly quiet day for us owing to bad weather over the GULF OF TUNIS. A section of six aircraft did a shipping patrol before breakfast and at mid-day while we had eight aircraft escorting KITTYHAWKS on an anti-shipping patrol in the GULF OF TUNIS, another section of four carried out an offensive patrol in the same area. No enemy aircraft were seen or reported.

04/05/43

We began the day with a shipping patrol just after dawn and finished with another one when our aircraft made dusk landings. In the morning we carried out an uneventful patrol over the GULF OF TUNIS and later on we escorted KITTYHAWKS on an anti-shipping patrol in the same area. W/Cmdr. P. OLVER DFC., led a formation of three SPITFIRE IX's on an offensive patrol of the area North of ENFIDAVILLE late in the afternoon but, as in other operations, no enemy aircraft were encountered. Perhaps the HUN is saving his LUFTWAFFE for one final show at the end of this campaign.

05/05/43

At 1000 hours this morning we received instructions for our "A" PARTY to move up to HERGLA and by the early afternoon the move had been completed but the aircraft remained at GOUBRINE. A weather and shipping recce was made at dawn and, when a favourable report was given, our Squadron escorted KITTYHAWKS

on an anti-shipping patrol in the GULF OF TUNIS. Later in the morning four of our SPITFIRE IX's carried out an offensive patrol in the same area led by W/Cmdr. P. OLVER DFC. The leader and P/O. R. PROBERT damaged a Me 109 each out of a formation of 30 plus Me 109's and Mc 202's they encountered. At mid-lay we escorted BALTIMORES and KITTYHAWKS over the CAP BON PENINSULA and our last operation of the day was an escort to KITTYHAWKS on an anti-shipping patrol in the usual area.

COMMANDING OFFICER HUMPHREYS

06/05/54

A signal was received today appointing F/Lt. P.H. HUMPHREYS as SQUADRON COMMANDER to take the place of S/Ldr. W.J. HARPER, who becomes O.T.E. S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS is the eleventh Commanding Officer of the Squadron since it was reformed on 10th OCTOBER, 1939. Our new COMMANDING OFFICER first joined the Squadron in JULY, 1941, and rejoined us on 3rd MARCH this year. F/O. E. SLY takes over command of "B" FLIGHT from today. Before our aircraft flew up to HERGLA this morning, two SPITFIRE V's carried out a weather recce of the FURNA area, and the Squadron escorted KITTYHAWKS on an anti-shipping patrol in the GULF OF TUNIS. KITTYHAWKS were again escorted in the afternoon when they attacked a target in the OUDNA area,. No enemy aircraft were seen on any of these operations or in the last show of the day when we made an offensive patrol over the GULF OF TUNIS.

07/05/43

Our four operations today were all connected with anti-shipping patrols in the GULF OF TUNIS but there were no encounters with the enemy. At night, we had a heavy thunderstorm and the landing ground appeared to be unserviceable. TUNIS is in our hands!

08/05/43

Our aircraft returned to GOUBRINE one by one as soon as they could be dragged out of the mud this morning. The first operation of the day was an escort and top cover to LIGHT-BOMBERS which "plastered" the landing ground at PANTELLERIA and in the afternoon we escorted KITTYHAWKS on an anti-shipping patrol in the GULF OF TUNIS. Four of our SPITFIRE IX's carried out an offensive patrol during this latter operation. At night, S/Ldr. W.J. HARPER received the news that a possibility existed of his returning to ENGLAND and this was duly celebrated.

09/05/43

The Squadron was active from dawn to dusk again today. At 0455 hours two of our pilots made a weather recce of the CAP BON and PANTELLERIA areas and this was followed an hour later by an escort to KITTYHAWKS on an anti-shipping patrol in the same areas. Two Squadrons of KITTYHAWKS were escorted to the CAP BON area later in the morning and just after mid-day four of our SPITFIRE IX's carried out an offensive patrol there. Another anti-shipping patrol by KITTYHAWKS was escorted to CAP BON in the afternoon and at dusk W/Comdr. P. OLVER DFC., led five SPITFIRE

IX's on a patrol of the east side of the PENINSULA hoping to intercept enemy transport aircraft but none were seen.

10/05/43

The A.O.C. in C., AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR TEDDER and the A.O.C., AIR VICE MARSHAL H. BROADHURST, visited the Squadron today. Three operations were carried out in connection with the bombing of PANTELLERIA by LIGHT BOMBERS and we also escorted KITTYHAWKS on an armed recce of the CAP BON area. The LUFTWAFFE continued to be conspicuous by its absence. F/O. DICKS-SHERWOOD joined the Squadron on posting from 238 SQUADRON. During the last few days when TUNIS and BIZERTA have fallen to our ARMIES we have been able to have a ringside view of shelling by our troops against the enemy pocket which still exists within nine miles of our landing ground.

11/05/43

On the three trips today we escorted KITTYHAWKS on armed reconnaissance of the CAP BON PENINSULA. The last operation was led by our "ACE" F/Lt. NEVILLE F. DUKE, D.S.O., D.F.C. and BAR, and it was fitting that when on returning he heard the Controller telling another formation "The show is off" — because our troops had reached CAP BON — he had completed 200 hours on his second operational tour. A really grand show, Neville, with 22 enemy aircraft destroyed!

12/05/43

There were no operational trips for us today and advantage was taken of this opportunity to train several of our new pilots. Permission was granted for personnel to visit TUNIS during the next three days and arrangements were made by the Adjutant for 50% of the airmen to go there tomorrow and the remainder on the following day. F/Lt. L.R.HOLT arrived on attachment from No. 25 M.R.S. in time to join in our victory celebrations. It was at 1945 hours that news was received of the final capitulation of the enemy forces in TUNISIA and of the capture of GENERAL VON ARNIM. Attached is a "write-up" of F/Lt. N.F. DUKE, DSO., DFC. and BAR which appeared in today's issue of "TRIPOLI TIMES".

13/05/43

Six of our aircraft were at Readiness from 0900 hours to mid-day today but were not sent off and the Squadron was then released for the rest of the day. Three of our lorries were filled with airmen who went on the visit to TUNIS.

14/05/43

No operational flying again today, but we had the Squadron at Readiness for three hours in the afternoon. Another large party of airmen visited TUNIS today and, on return, they were agreed that it was the best place we have seen since ALEXANDRIA.

15/05/43

The only flying today was for training purposes. Our "A" Party received instruction, to move to SURMAN and it was decided that

the party which had remained at BOU GOUBRINE should proceed there at first light tomorrow.

16/05/43

No operational flying but some training was continued today. "A" Party moved off from BOU GOUBRINE and made good progress, reaching the outskirts of MEDENINE before dinner.

17/05/43

Destination of "A" Party was altered to BEN GARDANE NORTH L.G. and they arrived there at 1100 hours. No arrangements had been made regarding aircraft disposal areas and other units were occupying the best sites but our party parked in the Northeast corner as usual. There was no operational flying from HERGLA. Several pilots from the other squadrons in the Wing were invited to a party in our Pilots' Mess and it went off in the traditional 92 style. There was a pile of trousers and shirts in the Mess when our visitors had gone and we hope that none of them will suffer any effects from exposure!

18/05/43

Sgt. F.E. BRISTER flew to BEN GARDANE with instructions for the "A" Party to move to CASTEL BENITO, within half-an-hour of his arrival, another message was received cancelling those instructions. Some more training was carried out at HERGLA.

19/05/43

MAJOR MOODY, of No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON, called a meeting at WING to allocate dispersal areas for our aircraft. We were fortunate in not having to move our site which is nearest the sea. The landing ground was unserviceable after heavy rain last night.

BEN GARDANE

20/05/43

Our aircraft arrived at BEN GARDANE NORTH L.G. from HERGLA this morning but there was no operational flying. All personnel took advantage of wonderful weather to increase their number of sun-bathing hours.

21/05/43

No operational flying. The main party left HERGLA early this morning and were within 20 miles of GABES when they parked for the night.

22/05/43

Two Sections of four aircraft were sent off this morning to carry out a convoy patrol but neither was able to locate the ships although they made a thorough search of the area. Our main party arrived in the afternoon and set up camp near the sea. Three new pilots reported to the Squadron on posting from WING TRAINING FLIGHT. They are PILOT OFFICERS McDERMOTT, FAKHRY and SAYLE.

23/05/43

We are sorry to lose F/O. D.L.G. TURVEY who left us today on posting as an instructor to the WING TRAINING FLIGHT. Our COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS was busy preparing to go to CAIRO tomorrow on course. There was no flying all day.

24/05/43

No operational flying was carried out today and most of our pilots have gone to the DELTA on leave. F/Lt. E. SLY is in charge of the Squadron during the C.O.'s absence. F/O. HENDERSON joined us today on posting from M.E.C.G.S. BALLAH.

25/05/43

There was no training or operational flying again today. The ADJUTANT, F/O. G.L. TRAVIS, has arranged a cricket competition amongst the Squadron and the first game is to be played tomorrow. A Squadron cricket team today beat a team from No. 59 R.S.U., but the SALVAGE UNIT proved much better at Soccer which they won by 4—1.

26/05/43

In the morning there was some training carried out by our new pilots. In the cricket competition Maintenance Flight decisively beat Headquarters this afternoon. F/O. G.J. CORNISH was today posted to the Squadron as INTELLIGENCE OFFICER. He first joined us on 12th January, 1942, as a Code and Cipher Officer, but

has been acting as INTELLIGENCE OFFICER since 27th September, 1942.

27/05/43

During this morning there was some practice flying by our new pilots. We congratulate F/O. J. RAWES on his promotion to FLIGHT LIEUTENANT but we are very sorry to learn that he is leaving us to become WING ENGINEER OFFICER. He has been with the Squadron since January, 1942, and under his supervision the serviceability of our aircraft has been higher than that of every other Squadron in the WESTERN DESERT. F/o. LONGSTAFF reported today on posting from No. 59 R.S.U. to take over F/Lt. RAWES' duties. "A" Flight cricket team won decisively against "B" Flight in the competition.

28/05/43

There was no flying today and Squadron personnel began, in earnest, training designed to toughen them for our next campaign. At night S/Ldr. PORTER, F/Lt. RAWES and CAPTAIN HEFFORD visited the Pilots' Mess and celebrated nothing in particular but it was a very happy party.

29/05/43

In the cricket competition Maintenance beat "B" Flight today. There was no flying and, consequently, personnel continued to undergo toughening exercises which they appear to enjoy.

30/05/43

Five of our aircraft were flown away this morning for engine change and another six were received as replacement from No. 39 R.S.U. There was no other flying. Competition in the cricket matches is keen and today "A" Flight beat Headquarters by 84 to 51 runs. No arrangements have been made to fly our O.T.E. pilots to the DELTA and four of them are still with us. It is a scandal that pilots with such a splendid record as our F/Lt. NEVILLE DUKE, DSO., DFC. and BAR, should be kept hanging about in this way. P/O. J.H. PHILLIPS reported on posting from 31 A.S.P. to take over the duties of EQUIPMENT OFFICER.

31/05/43

There was no flying today apart from an air test of one of our SPITFIRE IX's. The total number of sorties for the month was 279 involving 382.25 operational hours and non-operational hours amounted to 115.20

01/06/43

Two of our pilots went to HERGLA today and flew aircraft from there to base. There was no other flying. It was a sad parting today when we bid "Au Revoir" to F/Lt. NEVILLE DUKE, DSO., DFC. and BAR and to F/Lt. C.G. WOOLGROVE. It is our hope that "Neville" is able to go to ENGLAND and continue his grand work from there. "DOC" WOOLGROVE is to become a "Base Wallah" at HELIOPOLIS and we wish him every success.

02/06/43

Several of our pilots carried out training flights this morning and others did some night flying at the end of the day. We shall miss F/O. SIMPSON, P/O. BRUCKSHAW and P/O. MacFARLANE who left us today at the end of their operational tour.

03/06/43

During the morning some practice flying was carried out. Orders were received for our first party to move tomorrow to an unknown destination, and these men were fully kitted at the store during the day. It had been arranged that Squadron Sports Competition would be held but with the move of a large number of men being so imminent, it was decided that a sing-song would be held in the Airmen's Canteen. Six hundred bottles of beer had been laid on for the occasion and several large fruit cakes bought in CAIRO at GROPPY'S six months ago and sandwiches were provided. By 2100 hours there was not much "Song" in the sing-song but everyone was warmed up for a happy evening which extended until the early hours of the next day. It was an enjoyable party.

04/06/43

The move of the first party was postponed for 24 hours. There was some flying done during the day by pilots testing aircraft received from the R.S.U. F/Sgt. V. CARTER (Signals), who has been with the Squadron since it was re-formed on 10th October 1939, was today posted to 244 WING HEADQUARTERS to await his commission.

05/06/43

In accordance with Movement Order No. 1 issued by 214 Group our first party left BEN GARDANE at 1115 hours for an undisclosed destination. F/Lt. SAVAGE and F/O. LONGSTAFF attended a conference at WING HEADQUARTERS where GROUP CAPTAIN J. DARWIN spoke on forthcoming events. There was a little flying done in the way of air tests of aircraft.

06/06/43

There was some training carried out during the day. S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS returned from CAIRO where he had been attending a course.

07/06/43

Long-range tanks on several of our aircraft were tested today and seven pilots carried out night flying later.

08/06/43

A convoy of 15 of our vehicles with drivers and F/O. WIHAK and F/Sgt. MacKAY proceeded to TRIPOLI for forward disposal to MALTA. There was more training during the day. P/O. W.E. ALLEN left the Squadron on posting to 206 GROUP and F/Lt. RICHARDSON and F/O. HAZEL joined us. A supply of 800 bottles of beer was obtained and the Squadron enjoyed a very happy party.

09/06/43

Our pilots continued with their training programme.

10/06/43

There was more practice flying today.

11/06/43

P/O. DIBDEN, 2/Lt. GASSON, and Sgt. KING joined us today on posting from the WING TRAINING FLIGHT. Our pilots are eager to be on operations again, but the only flying done was training to fit themselves to beat the best the HUN can put up against us.

12/16/43

F/O. BRADLEY SMITH was today posted to No. 22 P.T.C. for transfer to the USAAF. WE shall miss him very much as he has been amongst the keenest of our pilots. F/Sgt. C.F. BROWN, in charge of "B" FLIGHT, has been awarded the AIR FORCE LONG SERVICE MEDAL — 18 years undetected crime!!

13/06/43

F/O. LONGSTAFF and P/O. PHILLIPS left by air for MALTA. Long range tanks were air-tested on more of our aircraft today to prepare for tomorrow's trip.

14/06/43

F/O. CORNISH, P/O. PROBERT, P/O. IVES, F/Lt. RICHARDSON, P/O. McDERMOTT and F/O. HAZEL left for TRIPOLI with 44 men today for shipment to MALTA where they landed (in TRIPOLI) without incident after one and a quarter hours in the air.

15/06/43

Only one aircraft took off today and that was for an air test.

16/06/43

There were several more air tests today but no operational flying. Eight vehicles left BEN GARDANE with ten men for TRIPOLI

17/06/43

More air tests of aircraft and their long range tanks were carried out today. The party of six officers and 44 men arrived in MALTA

18/06/43

There was some training in the air today.

19/06/43

Our last party arrived in MALTA today. A Squadron practice formation was flown in preparation for a "show" tomorrow.

20/06/43

At last we begin operations again! With No. 145 SQUADRON we carried out an offensive sweep of COMISO area in SICILY but it was uneventful. The personnel are finding it difficult to cope with the "Bull" on the island after the comparative laxity of life in the desert.

21/06/43

From dawn today we had two sections of four aircraft on Readiness and it was not until 1930 hours that there was any flying. Four

aircraft then patrolled the island on an interception patrol without incident. We were released at dusk.

22/06/43

This morning our Squadron and No. 1 SAAF Squadron carried out a sweep of SOUTH-EASTERN SICILY. Ever since June last year, when we first flew with SOUTH AFRICANS, there has been a grand spirit of friendship and co-operation between our Squadrons and we hoped that together we might open the score for the WING in operations over MALTA. Our luck was out, however, for there was no sign of the HUN.

MALTA

23/06/43

There was no flying today although we had a team available at Dispersal throughout the day. We are settling down here but shall be happier when operations begin in earnest.

24/06/43

We were released today but a message received during the morning recalled all pilots to the aerodrome to meet the SECRETARY OF AIR, SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, who had arrived by air to thank the WESTERN DESERT Squadrons for their grand work in the last campaign.

25/06/43

An early morning call for 0300 was booked by our pilots who were doing pre-dawn readiness today. The ride in the bus to the aerodrome awakened them thoroughly but it was not until late in the morning that any were required to take-off. At that time, and again at 1930 hours, a section of four of our SPITFIRE IX's carried out an interception patrol. The first was uneventful but in the second operation two Me 109's were sighted 10 miles NORTH OF GOZO. Our pilots chased them as they dived from 25,000 to 7,000 feet but lost them in the haze about five miles from SICILY. Better luck next time we hope.

26/06/43

We had a team available at Dispersal all day but they were not required. In the afternoon, the pilots not on the team bathed near SLIEMA and did some dinghy drill there.

27/06/43

This afternoon eight of our aircraft with 10 from No. 145 Squadron escorted No. 40 SAAF Squadron on a sweep to CATANIA. There was no sign of the enemy but our pilots had their first glimpse of ITALY before they turned about for base.

28/06/43

Throughout the day pilots have been available at Dispersal but they were not called for operations.

29/06/43

The Squadron was released today so S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, our C.O. took a large party of pilots to ST. PAUL'S BAY for an outing which was thoroughly enjoyed. S/Ldr. "BABE" WHITAMORE — ex 92 pilot, now C.O. of No. 81 Squadron — was the guest of the Squadron on this trip. It was with deep regret that we learned today that Sgt. W.C. LAWSON was killed recently at BEN GARDANE during training.

30/06/43

We are pleased to record that the following members of the Squadron have been MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES:-

805184 W/O JENKINS. F.A.C.,
513822 W/O. SANDERSON. G.,
365145 F/Sgt. BROWN. C.F.,
568330 F/Sgt. WILLIAMS. F.E.,
969070 Cpl. FINNIE. W.,
847690 Cpl. HUMPHRIES. A.W.,
1206411 Cpl. COBBETT. L.,
912662 LAC. HUGHES. E.J.
1283457 LAC. McCARTHY. E.M.
1063063 LAC. ORMEROD. D.,
1407460 LAC. WHITE J.H.W.,
1016577 LAC. HATTLE. J.,
1335957 ACI. EAGLE. D.

With ten aircraft of No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON we carried out a sweep of the COMISO area this afternoon. Plots of enemy aircraft

were reported but our pilots saw no sign of the HUN. Our total of operational hours for this month amounted to only 63 hours 15 minutes whereas our non-operational hours totalled 113 hours 5 minutes day and 8 hours 25 minutes for night flying.

LUQA, MALTA

01/07/43

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT J.M.V. CARPENTER DFC., joined us today to take over "B" Flight in place of FLIGHT LIEUTENANT E. SLY who became O.T.E. Once again our pilots spent the day at Dispersal but they were not required for operations.

02/07/43

There was a wing sweep over COMISO today in which six of our SPITFIRE V's and four of our IX's took part with aircraft from No. 1 SAAF and No. 145 Squadrons. This proved to be a stooge trip for there were no enemy aircraft in sight.

03/07/43

We had two sections at Dawn Readiness today. Just after 1700 hours in the evening we provided one Section of four aircraft to patrol a dinghy which was just over five miles from the Sicilian coast. When the launch arrived to pick up the pilot it was announced on the R/T that it was a HUN in the dinghy! A poor show on the part of the enemy to allow us to snatch one of his pilots from under his nose.

04/07/43

F/O. B. BAKER opened our score for operations from Malta by damaging a Mc 202 over COMISO today. He did this on a show in which 12 of our aircraft, with 12 from No. 145 Squadron, gave high cover to MITCHELLS and MARAUDERS which bombed GERBINI aerodrome.

05/07/43

During this evening, with No. 1 SAAF Squadron, we gave high cover to 36 MARAUDERS to GERBINI again but there was no sign at all of any enemy aircraft. Later in the day, eight of our SPITFIRE V's patrolled over a dinghy ten miles from the SICILIAN coast until five men in it were picked up by the A.S.R. launch. What grand work these A.S.R. men do!

06/07/43

We had 12 aircraft available today and eight of them were "On the line" for a couple of hours in the afternoon but we were not sent off.

07/07/43

This afternoon our Squadron, with 601 and 417 Squadrons, were detailed to give escort and high cover to 48 LIBERATORS bombing GERBINI Satellites 1 and 6. We flew to the target area and patrolled between it and CATANIA for 35 minutes but there was no sign either of our bombers or any enemy aircraft. After tea we had two sections at Readiness for three hours until dusk.

08/07/43

We had two Sections at Dawn Readiness but they were not required to take off. After noon, with 601 Squadron, we escorted 24 MITCHELLS which plastered COMISO aerodrome with bombs.

09/07/43

Today we were given the "gen" on forthcoming operations and our pilots are keyed up to deal effectively with enemy opposition. We wish our forces the best of luck. Our first operation today was to be an escort, with No. 1 SAAF Squadron, to 24 MITCHELLS bombing COMISO, but the bombers did not turn up at the rendezvous. Our SPITFIRE V's were ordered to return to base but our IX's swept SOUTH-EASTERN SICILY. They saw no enemy aircraft. In the afternoon F/Lt. T. SAVAGE led the Wing escort to 24 LIBERATORS which bombed COMISO. There was no opposition by A.A. or enemy aircraft.

10/07/43

The invasion of SICILY has begun and we have been engaged in maintaining air cover over the PACHINO PENINSULA throughout the day. We have done a total of 42 sorties. F/Lt. T. SAVAGE opened the score for the Squadron, and the Wing, for operations from MALTA when he destroyed a Ju 88 in his third show today. Our aircraft attacked six Ju 88s with an escort of 12 Me 109s and at least 2 Mc 202s, and besides F/Lt. SAVAGE'S success, 2/Lt. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) damaged another Ju 88. Our joy was overshadowed, however, by the news that both F/Lt. T. SAVAGE

and F/O. DICKS-SHERWOOD are missing. It is believed that "A" Flight's FLIGHT COMMANDER baled out and we are anxious for definite news. At Dusk a Section of six aircraft carried out another patrol of the same area — they saw no enemy aircraft and all made perfect night landings on their return. We are warned that our pilots must be prepared to fly at dawn to an aerodrome in SICILY

11/07/43

The move of our aircraft was postponed until 13th July. Our pilots had further success this afternoon during a patrol of the beaches between SCALAMBRI and GELA. They attacked a formation of 12 Ju 88s which were escorted by 30 plus fighters and in the ensuing combat four Ju 88s were destroyed, one probably destroyed and one damaged. F/Lt. RICHARDSON destroyed one and damaged one, F/O. M. JOWSEY destroyed one, Lt. A. SACHS and W/O. S.R. FRY each destroyed one and 2/Lt. J.E. GASSON damaged one. This is 92 Squadron in its form again! We regret that WING COMMANDER PETER OLVER — who was flying with us — has not yet returned.

12/07/43

From dawn until dusk today our aircraft patrolled over the beaches in SOUTH-EAST and SOUTHERN SICILY, but no enemy aircraft were encountered.

13/07/43

Early this morning eleven of our pilots took off from LUQA to patrol the beaches in the PACHINO PENINSULA and landed at the

new landing ground at PACHINO after an uneventful patrol. Our other pilots flew direct to the new L.G. In all, 41 sorties were flown today in patrols over the beach and our new base. Late in the afternoon P/O. G. WILSON forced landed near SYRACUSE short of petrol, but the local inhabitants proved to be very friendly and gave him food and shelter for the night. His aircraft was only slightly damaged. Squadron personnel left MALTA for SICILY this afternoon. They were delighted to find F/O. DICKS-SHERWOOD at the docks. He had been landed at MALTA from a trawler which picked him up on 10th July.

PACHINO, SICILY

14/07/43

Before our personnel arrived at PACHINO today our pilots had carried out two patrols. In the second of these our aircraft were jumped by six Mc 202's and Sgt. T.E. BRISTER'S aircraft was badly shot up. He landed safely at base however. It is interesting to note that although the enemy aircraft had the advantage of height and numbers, they would not stay to fight after the initial attack. There were three more patrols during the day and early in the afternoon, F/O. M. JOWSEY and P/O. PROBERT in SPITFIRE IX's encountered 12 Mc 202 fighter-bombers. F/O. M. JOWSEY destroyed one while P/O. PROBERT destroyed one and damaged another.

15/07/43

Two SPITFIRE VIII's were delivered to us today and the pilots are anxious to test them. We did five patrols over the AUGUSTA —

SYRACUSE area. It was in the third show that four of our SPITFIRE V's engaged six Mc 202s and in the combat F/O. M JOWSEY and F/Sgt. M. ASKEY each damaged one. After expending all his ammunition, F/O. M. JOWSEY continued on the tail of the Mc 202 for five minutes just in case the enemy aircraft found it possible to reverse the position.

16/07/43

Nothing more dangerous than KITTYHAWKS were seen on the two patrols we did over the AUGUSTA area early this morning. Eight of our aircraft covered a large number of warships which were off SYRACUSE this afternoon. Included in this convoy were the RODNEY and NELSON which bombarded CATANIA at dusk. Orders were received for the Squadron to move at dawn tomorrow for a new L.G. at CASSIBILE.

CASSIBILE

17/07/43

Not one enemy aircraft was seen during the five patrols carried out today. It appears, almost, as if the HUN knows that our pilots are spoiling for a fight and he dare not risk his aircraft! It is confirmed that F/Lt. T. SAVAGE lost his life on 10th July. When he destroyed a Ju 88 he followed it down and was hit by A.A. from our warships but was unable to bale out. He will be greatly missed by the whole Squadron, for, quite apart from his grand leadership in the air, he had a charming personality. He had a quiet, unassuming manner which endeared him to officers and men alike.

18/07/43

At dawn we patrolled over the CATANIA — GERBINI area but there were no hostile aircraft in the area. During the morning we were to escort 38 KITTYHAWKS on an armed recce of the CATANIA — MESSINA road and the rendezvous was to be at 500 ft over our L.G. However, the fighter -bombers flew over at 8,000 feet and our aircraft were unable to contact them. We patrolled over the area where the KITTYHAWKS were operating but the patrol was uneventful.

19/07/43

One more day without any sign of enemy air activity! We carried out the usual patrol over the CATANIA area — where our ground forces are meeting stiffer resistance — and later in the day, 18 of our aircraft gave top cover to three Squadrons of KITTYHAWKS on an armed recce north of CATANIA. It is truly amazing the way in which the air battle has died down. With a few hours of leisure available at the odd times of the day, the Squadron has been able to appreciate the countryside in which it finds itself. This is the nearest thing to home we have seen for 18 months.

20/07/43

This has been another day of “stooge” patrols over the CATANIA — GERBINI area. Appreciation has been expressed by the airmen for the supply of “Composite Rations” which is being issued at present. It is hoped that we can continue to obtain these items

which are a great improvement on the "Hard Rations" we had in the Desert.

21/07/43

We welcomed F/Lt. H. HARDS DFM., who reported today from No. 601 Squadron to be FLIGHT COMMANDER of "A' FLIGHT. F/Lt. R. RICHARDSON, who joined us on 8th June this year, has been posted to No. 93 Squadron. He takes with him our congratulations on his promotion to Flight Commander and our best wishes for the future. Throughout today we have had a Section at Advanced Readiness. It was not until the evening that they "left the deck" and then they were scrambled for an interception 40 miles East of AUGUSTA. There was no sign of any hostile aircraft when our pilots reached the position.

22/07/43

Once during the morning and again in the afternoon our Squadron escorted KITTYHAWKS which bombed targets in NORTH-EASTERN SICILY. There was no enemy opposition.

23/07/43

We escorted two squadrons of KITTYHAWKS this morning on an Armed Recce of the roads WEST and EAST of TROINA and, later in the day, were close escort to 24 medium bombers which attacked RANDAZZO. Once again, there was no sign of the LUFTWAFFE.

24/07/43

S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, our COMMANDING OFFICER, announced today that one of our former pilots of the BATTLE OF BRITAIN days had been appointed GROUP CAPTAIN in charge of our WING. He is none other than GROUP CAPTAIN BRIAN KINGCOME, DSO., DFC. and BAR. Soon after dawn we carried out a convoy patrol — the only result reported was a distinct soreness on the pilots' posteriors after a one hour and 40 minutes "stooge" trip. In the afternoon our C.O., S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, and P/O. R. PROBERT climbed up to 29,000 feet in SPITFIRE VIII's hoping to intercept an enemy recce plane but no plots were reported by the controller. Our last show of the day was to have been top cover to 24 BOSTONS but they did not turn up at the rendezvous so we were instructed to patrol the target area. This proved uneventful. MAJOR "SNOWY" MOODY, DFC., of No. 1 SAAF Squadron, called on us during the evening to say "good-bye." We shall certainly miss him but are pleased to hear that an ex-92 pilot, MAJOR H. FAURE, DFC., takes his place as their SQUADRON COMMANDER.

25/07/43

There were three shows for us today. The first was an escort to 24 KITTYHAWKS which bombed the roads NORTH of MOUNT ETNA. The other two we carried out sweeps with No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON over the coastline between CAPE MILAZZO and CAPE ROSCOLNO. It was in that area that SPITFIRES of 322 WING destroyed 21 Ju 52's, 4 Me 109's and 1 Mc 202 earlier today but

we saw no sign of the enemy in the air. "A" Party moved to LENTINI WEST L.G. this afternoon.

LENTINI, SICILY

26/07/43

At 0700 hours our aircraft flew to the new airfield and were at Readiness all day. We did another sweep over the NORHT-EAST SICILIAN coast but had no luck — perhaps the HUN learned his lesson yesterday! Sgt. PEACOCK arrived today on posting from 244 WING TRAINING FLIGHT.

27/07/43

Three times today we were detailed to escort BOSTONS which bombed targets at AGIRA and CAPE MILAZZO. There was no enemy opposition apart from some flak.

28/07/43

F/O. R.S.S. DICKS-SHERWOOD destroyed a Me 109 when he and 2/Lt. GASSON were on patrol over AUGUSTA. This brought his personal score to 5½ — 1 — 5. Three other pairs patrolled AUGUSTA and SYRACUSE without incident. In the afternoon we were detailed to be close escort to MEDIUM BOMBERS, but they did not turn up at the rendezvous so we patrolled just North of AUGUSTA for an hour. We intercepted four aircraft which proved to be friendly.

29/07/43

WING COMMANDER DUNCAN-SMITH led the Squadron giving top cover to BALTIMORES which bombed a target at CAPE MILAZZO this morning. On returning from this trip he dived on two aircraft over NICOSIA, hoping for joy, but they turned out to be MUSTANGS. With 601 Squadron giving top cover, six of our aircraft provided close escort to 12 BOSTONS towards the target at CAPE MILAZZO. The cloud was too low and thick for the bombers which returned with their load. Bad weather caused the cancellation of further operations planned for the afternoon.

30/07/43

In pairs, our aircraft patrolled over SYRACUSE and AUGUSTA throughout this morning. Several aircraft were intercepted but each proved to be friendly. Four were scrambled for an interception patrol SOUTH-WEST OF CATANIA, but they saw no enemy planes.

31/07/43

Twice this morning, we have provided close escort to medium bombers. There were 12 MARAUDERS in the first show with PATERNO as the target and 12 BOSTONS bombed SAN MARIA in the second. The object of the bombing was to prevent enemy reinforcements being moved from CATANIA westward toward ADRANO and CENTURIPPE. There was no enemy opposition. In 88 operations this month our hours have totalled 809.50 day and 10.00 night, while non-operational hours amounted to 23.20. Eight

enemy aircraft have been destroyed, one probably destroyed, and six damaged for the loss of two aircraft Cat. III. With one pilot safe, and one aircraft Cat. II through enemy action.

LENTINI WEST

01/08/43

We provided close escort to medium bombers again today. The targets for the three shows were PATERNO, BIANCAVILLA and MILAZZO and on no occasion was there any enemy opposition. In the late afternoon six of our aircraft maintained a standing patrol over base in anticipation of an enemy raid which did not materialise. F/Lt. E.A.G.C. BRUCE was posted to the Squadron (for the third time!) today.

02/08/43

There was only one operational trip for us today. We escorted 12 BALTIMORES which dropped bombs at ADRANO.

03/08/43

Early this morning three sections of two aircraft provided escort to a WALRUS which attempted to rescue a pilot in the sea off RIPOSTO. Unfortunately, only wreckage was seen. The Squadron maintained a standing patrol over the road between FIUMEFREDDO and BARCELLONA, while KITTYHAWKS were strafing in the area. No enemy aircraft were seen during that patrol nor later in the day when we patrolled between RANDAZZO and TROINA. What has happened to the LUFTWAFFE? There have

been signs of the enemy ground forces withdrawing their heavy equipment today so we can expect big movements before long.

04/08/43

We carried out a total of 42 sorties today and maintained a standing patrol between CATANIA and TAORMINA. KITTYHAWKS, strafing in the area, destroyed many enemy M/T and our warships blocked the coast road by accurate shelling. CATANIA, the second largest town in SICILY, fell to the 8th ARMY today.

05/08/43

Escort was provided, on two occasions today, to a Squadron of KITTYHAWKS of 57 PURSUIT GROUP on armed reconnaissance. The first trip was over MESSINA where we experienced concentrated accurate flak from both sides of the STRAITS and S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS' aircraft had a large hole in the wing-tip. It was over the "Toe" of ITALY, between CAPE D'ARMI and CAPE SPARTIVENTO, on the second show, that we expected some excitement, but no enemy aircraft were encountered and no targets were found for the KITTYHAWKS.

06/08/43

An armed recce over the North-East Coast of SICILY was carried out by KITTYHAWKS which we escorted this morning without incident. Twice, in the afternoon, we provided close escort to MEDIUM BOMBERS which attacked RANDAZZO with good effect. For the first time in many days we met some opposition in the air. It was after the MITCHELLS had dropped their load that we were

attacked by 9 plus MC 202's which dived on our formation from 18,000 feet. They climbed after their initial attack and were unwilling to fight. F/O. M. JOWSEY and F/Sgt. M. ASKEY in SPITFIRE VIII's both fired but saw no results apart from strikes.

07/08/43

Soon after dawn, we escorted 12 MITCHELLS to RANDAZZO where they dropped their bombs across the town blocking the road. Later in the morning, ten of our aircraft patrolled between MALETTA, RANDAZZO and FRANCAVILLE to give indirect cover to several formations of KITTYHAWKS which were operating in the area bombing and strafing enemy transport. The third operation was a close escort to WARHAWKS of 64 SQUADRON on an armed recce of the MESSINA STRAITS. Not once during the day was an enemy aircraft sighted.

08/08/43

We expected to be kept busy today because 168 MEDIUM BOMBERS had a 12-hour programme with RANDAZZO as their target but we were disappointed. Ten of our aircraft, in pairs, escorted a WALRUS to ten miles east of TAORMINA, where a pilot was picked up, and back to AUGUSTA, and the only other job we had was a close escort to WARHAWKS of 86 SQUADRON on an anti-shipping recce in the MESSINA STRAITS, which proved uneventful.

09/08/43

Our pilots are all anxious for action and are fed up with “stooge” operations in which they meet no opposition. A suggestion has been made that permission be requested for pairs of our aircraft, with long-range tanks, to carry out a sweep over the airfields around NAPLES to stir up the HUN. We provided close escort to KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING on an anti-shipping recce NORTH of MESSINA early this morning, and our pilots brought back valuable information about enemy shipping movements in the STRAITS. Two aircraft were scrambled just before lunch and ordered to patrol base but apparently it was a false alarm because they were ordered to “pancake” after being airborne for 15 minutes.

10/08/43

Only six of our pilots took to the air today; four of them escorted eight KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING on an armed recce of the MESSINA STRAITS and the other two were sent off to patrol over AUGUSTA just before dusk. Ten minutes before this pair was due to take off, four aircraft of No. 1 SAAF Squadron were scrambled to a position several miles of AUGUSTA where they encountered two F/W 190's. They destroyed one and damaged the other. How envious we were of them!

11/08/43

At dawn this morning two of our aircraft carried out an hour's patrol over AUGUSTA and were relieved by two more. There was no incident. During the morning we provided close cover to

KITTYHAWKS of 79 GROUP on an anti-shipping patrol in the MESSINA area, and in the afternoon, we escorted KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING which bombed a special target of gun positions near MALETTA. We entertained a nursing sister in our mess this evening. She was an old friend of "DOC" HOLT but quite a warm friendship sprung up during the course of the evening between our guest and "ADT" TRAVIS until F/Lt. "TONY" BRUCE came on the scene. He it was who took the visitor out to "have a look at one of our kites" but during this very pleasant interlude the HUN decided to bomb our airfield. It is said that the gallant "TONY" threw himself over the body of the Nursing Sister to protect her from the blast. Three of our aircraft were badly damaged and three more slightly damaged but there were no casualties to personnel. Our pilots and airmen did some grand work helping to extinguish fires which broke out in other dispersal areas.

12/08/43

Although our airfield was made serviceable by mid-day, none of our aircraft took off. There remain three unexploded bombs on the taxiing strip on the North side of the runway.

13/08/43

At 0630 hours this morning two of our pilots were scrambled to AUGUSTA where they intercepted an aircraft which proved to be friendly. Once during the morning and twice after lunch we provided close escort to KITTYHAWKS on armed shipping recces, in the MESSINA STRAITS and, apart from intense flak of all calibres, there was no enemy opposition.

14/08/43

Early this morning we covered 12 MEDIUM BOMBERS which attacked a target at SAN NICOLA and then we had four "shows" during the day in which we escorted KITTYHAWKS on the usual anti-shipping patrols over MESSINA. Again here were no enemy aircraft about.

15/08/43

The KIYYHAWK escort shows are becoming monotonous. We began at 0600 hours this morning and escorted three formations during the day, without seeing any sign of the HUN in the sky. His shipping is being attacked all day long with good results and it must be demoralising for the NAZI troops to see only aircraft with ALLIED markings.

16/08/43

W/Commander. DUNCAN SMITH DSO., DFC., led four of our aircraft on an offensive sweep over VIBO VALENTIA this morning, but the only enemy aircraft seen were two on the scrapheap there. Eight pilots took off at 0725 hours and gave cover to 12 WARHAWKS bombing shipping in the MESSINA STRAITS and six escorted 12 BALTIMORES to MESSINA later in the morning. After noon, we patrolled over warships 12 miles S.E. of TAORMINA for an hour. It is with the deepest regret that we record that F/O. BRENDAN BAKER is missing from the show in which he led four of our aircraft escorting KITTYHAWKS NORTH OF MESSINA. Two of these pilots were forced to return early owing to engine trouble

and the two remaining aircraft were attacked by five plus Mc 202's when five miles S.W. of PALMI. F/O. G. WILSON dived with three of them for several minutes until the enemy aircraft dived away and were lost in the haze. After that operation we escorted another KITTYHAWK formation to the same area and our pilots kept a good look out for a dinghy there but saw no sign of one.

17/08/43

We were the duty Squadron from dawn till dusk today and seven Sections were scrambled for local interception. On three occasions friendly aircraft were intercepted but not once was the enemy sighted. With the entry of ALLIED troops into MESSINA early today the SICILAIN campaign has been brought to a close. It has been disappointing from our point of view because we have met only slight opposition in the air.

18/08/43

Our Wing was released today and so our C.O., S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, arranged for the airmen to have a tour around MOUNT ETNA. Pilots and officers also took the opportunity to have an outing to CATANIA and TAORMINA.

19/08/43

We are again released all day but several pilots did some practice flying in the morning.

20/08/43

Although we had a team Available at Three Hours Notice today, most of the Squadron were able to get a swim in the sea. There was some practice flying before lunch.

21/08/43

Three times today we provide cover to KITTYHAWK on armed recces over the "TOE" of ITALY, but there was no sign of enemy aircraft on any trip.

22/08/43

Squadron was released again but there was some practice flying.

23/08/43

There was a considerable amount of practice flying but no "ops". Full advantage has been taken of our days off and both pilots and airmen have paid visits to MOUNT ETNA'S crater.

24/08/43

We had a Wing "show" with long-range tanks this afternoon, in which we took part with 12 aircraft of No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON and 12 of No. 601 SQUADRON. It was a delousing operation for 96 MUSTANGS which attacked targets in SOUTHERN ITALY. It was disappointing because the HUN was conspicuous by his absence.

25/08/43

Another day off! F/Lt. "TONY" BRUCE left us today on posting to 417 SQUADRON. Several members of the Squadron proved their

fitness by climbing MOUNT ETNA again, but there were a number of stragglers!

26/08/43

We were again released, but there was some practice flying in the morning. At night we entertained four CANADIAN NURSING SISTERS who had been invited by P/O. R. PROBERT. F/Lt. J.H. NICHOLLS, DFC., joined the Squadron on posting from the WING TRAINING FLIGHT where he had been CHIEF INSTRUCTOR. He is to be FLIGHT COMMANDER of "B" FLIGHT in place of F/Lt. J.V.M. CARPENTER, DFC., who has contracted malaria.

27/08/43

Twice today, four of our aircraft provided close escort to six BOSTONS which bombed enemy gun positions to the East of REGGIO. We encountered neither enemy aircraft nor flak in these operations.

28/08/43

The Squadron was released today and some more practice flying was carried out during the morning. F/O. "HINDU" HENDERSON and F/O. K. SISSONS joined us today for flying duties.

29/08/43

Six of our SPITFIRE VIII's were at Standby for several hours today in anticipation of an enemy raid on AUGUSTA and two operations were arranged for them at 1650 and 1850 hours but, owing to

heavy rain during the afternoon which rendered the airfield unserviceable, they could not take off.

30/08/43

The landing ground was still unserviceable this morning and, in consequence, the Wing was released. Five of our pilots went to TAORINA for 48 hours leave. They were F/O. E. DICKS-SHERWOOD, F/O. G. WILSON, F/Sgt. M. ASKEY, Sgt. P. SAVILL and Sgt. H. PERCIVAL. At mid-day we were ordered to send an "A" Party to GERBINI MIAN AIRFIELD. From there we carried out an escort to a WALRUS which successfully rescued two pilots from the sea EAST of the "TOE" of ITALY

31/08/43

It was just after dawn when four of our pilots took off this morning and patrolled over PACHINO for an hour without incident. We received instructions to return to LENTINI WEST L.G. and immediately after lunch the aircraft and "A" Party moved back. There were no further operations. Our total operational hours for this month amount to 433 hours 40 minutes, which is a very low figure compared with that of July when our Squadron flew more hours than any other fighter squadron. We carried 356 sorties on "ops" and there were 126 non-operational sorties involving 77 hours 30 minutes of flying time.

01/09/43

Early this morning six of our SPITFIRE VII's patrolled over AUGUSTA harbour at 20,000 feet hoping for an interception which

did not materialise. Later, at Squadron strength, we escorted 24 MITCHELLS which bombed OLIVETO without any opposition.

02/09/43

We are sorry to say "Good-bye" to F/O. M. JOWSEY and P/O. R. PROBERT who left us on being posted O.T.E. Both of them have done grand work in the Squadron. F/O. DIBDEN reported on posting from the Training Flight. During the forenoon we escorted 12 KITTYHAWKS bombing barges on the coast off FRANCAVILLA and two of our SPITFIRE VIII's, with WING COMMANDER SMITH leading, carried out an independent patrol of the area.

Unfortunately, the WING COMMANDER was unable to switch on his main petrol tank and he was forced to bale out three miles off the coast of TROPEA. 12 of our aircraft deloused for MITCHELLS East of CASTILO without incident in the afternoon and eight SPITFIRE V's provided close escort to 24 BOSTONS which were detailed to bomb a target six miles N.E. of REGGIO. Later our C.O. led four aircraft to escort the WALRUS which had picked up the WING COMMANDER. It landed at MILAZZO having been shot up by two Me 109's while another Squadron was covering it. The crew and WING COMMANDER were unhurt and one of the enemy aircraft was shot down by No. 1 SAAF SQUADRON.

03/09/43

The invasion of ITALY began at 0430 hours this morning and throughout the day we have maintained a standing patrol of the MESSINA STRAITS to cover the landings. Our sorties totalled 47 out of the Wing aggregate of 157. On two shows we encountered a

formation of eight F/W 190's and forced them to jettison their bombs but were unable to make any claims. The Squadron was very pleased to hear of the award of a well-earned DFC to F/O. E.S.S. DICKS-SHERWOOD. Grand show, ERIC! F/Sgt. BROWN , who was recently awarded the GOOD CONDUCT AND LONG SERVICE MEDAL, has been promoted WARRANT OFFICER. He joined the Squadron on the day it was formed and has maintained a very high standard in "B" FLIGHT of which he has been "Chiefy" since JULY, 1940.

04/09/43

Who would have believed that on the second day of the invasion, we would be sent off for only one show! We were at 30 minutes available until six of our aircraft were required at 1800 hours to escort a WALRUS to a position 45 miles NORTH OF MESSINA. They were forced to land at MILAZZO EAST landing ground at dusk. Officers and pilots were invited to spend the evening in the SEARGEANT'S MESS to celebrate W/O. BROWN'S promotion. GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINCOME, DSO., DFC., and BAR joined the party and everyone had a very happy time.

05/09/43

F/O. G. WILSON and F/Sgt. M. ASKEY in SPITFIRE VIII's escorted a STINSON from MILAZZO to REGGIO after breakfast this morning. A pilot of 145 SQUADRON was forced to bale out near CAPE VATICANO and we escorted a WALRUS to the position but the sea was too rough for it to alight. Four of our pilots took off after lunch to cover an A.S.R. launch on its way out and another

formation escorted it back after successfully picking up the pilot. Later, ten of our aircraft patrolled the MESSINA STRAITS until dusk without incident and six pilots landed at MILAZZO airfield.

06/09/43

Four of our SPITFIRE VIII's were on Standby for most of the day today but it was the V's which took off for a patrol of the MESSINA STRAITS in the afternoon. Only friendly aircraft were seen.

07/09/43

From dawn we had four aircraft at Readiness and four at 15 minutes and this state was maintained until dusk. Two formations of four aircraft patrolled the STRAITS in the afternoon but each show was uneventful.

08/09/43

To cover the landings of 231 BRIGADE the WING maintained standing patrol of the beaches at PIZZO from dawn until 0900 hours this morning. In all we did 44 sorties but did not have any luck. On two occasions a formation of eight F/W. 190's were seen but they were out of range. ITALY SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY TODAY.

09/09/43, 10/09/43, 11/09/43, 12/09/43 13/09/43

We have been released in order that acceptance checks may be made on ten SPITFIRE VIII's which have arrived during the 9th and 10th. A move to an unknown destination is imminent and it is

understood that we shall take only our VIII's with us. "A" party has embarked at SYRACUSE

14/09/43

A party of six pilots, three ground officers and 60 men left LENTINI by air for GROTTAGLIE, near TARANTO, and 16 pilots flew SPITFIRE VIII's over in the afternoon. 92 SQUADRON is the only Squadron from our Wing which is to operate in ITALY at present and is to be accommodated with 239 WING at GROTTAGLIE. Before we left SICILY, we were told to take the minimum amount of personal kit because it was expected that billets would be found for us and messing facilities available. On arrival we found that nothing at all had been provided and we had to make the best use of two blankets and a mosquito net.

15/09/43

Four of our aircraft have been on Readiness all day for local defence and twice they were scrambled for interceptions but only ITALIAN aircraft were seen. Our orders are not to attack them unless they show hostile intent. In the afternoon, eight of our SPITFIRE VIII's carried out two diversionary sweeps over the FOGGIA area.

GROTTAGLIE, ITALY

16/09/43

From dawn until 1100 hours we had four aircraft at Readiness and from that time until dusk the number was reduced to two. Early in

the morning WING COMMANDER SMITH led four of our SPITFIRE VIII's which escorted a Squadron of KITTYHAWKS to the EBOLI area. Later in the forenoon, the C.O. S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, led a formation of eight on an uneventful sweep of AVELLINO. At Squadron strength we patrolled between BARI and BARLETTA in the afternoon and also carried out a sweep of the FOGGIA area. The Squadron "A" and "B" parties arrived by sea late this evening. Our congratulations to F/Lt. M.S. HARDS, DFM on being awarded the DFC. He has a personal score of 10 destroyed, four probables and eight damaged.

17/09/43

Wing COMMANDER SMITH, DSO., DFC., led the Squadron on a dawn sweep of the FOGGIA area and on returning they strafed some M.T., damaging four vehicles. During the morning, we carried out another sweep of the same area and after lunch three of our aircraft escorted a Squadron of KITTYHAWKS there. The leader of these three, W/O. S.R. FRY, reported at least 60 Ju 88's on the FOGGIA satellite L.G.s and after doing another sweep there with six aircraft, we escorted 30 KITTYHAWKS which bombed and strafed the enemy planes. The two pilots who had been on Readiness all day were twice scrambled uneventfully.

18/09/43

"A" Party moved to SAN PANCRAZIO this morning but, as soon as they had unloaded and settled in comfortably, they were ordered to return to GROTTAGLIE. We had two aircraft on Readiness for local defence throughout the day and they were scrambled once but saw

no enemy aircraft. Early this morning we carried out a diversionary sweep of the FOGGIA area at Squadron strength and repeated the operation in the afternoon — each time without incident.

19/09/43

In the hope of intercepting an enemy recce plane, F/Lt. M.S. HARDS DFC., DFM., and 2/Lt. J. GASSON patrolled base before breakfast and their efforts were rewarded after half-an-hour's patrol. Coming out of the sun was a Me 109 at 9,000 feet and 2/Lt. GASSON chased it when it turned north. He closed to 100 yards and obtained strikes with cannon and machine guns. When last seen enemy aircraft was at 1,000 feet diving at an angle of 45 degrees with glycol pouring from it, but "JOHNNY" overshot and did not actually see it crash so he claims a "probable." Whilst this action was taking place, four of our aircraft swept the FOGGIA area, and later in the morning, six made a diversionary sweep over CERIGNOLA. After lunch, four of our pilots escorting a Squadron of KITTYHAWKS which attacked a large number of enemy M.T. reported near S. ANGELO and just after they landed another section took more KITTYHAWKS to the same area. At squadron strength we swept between FOGGIA and BOVINO later in the day but not once was there any sign of the HUN in the air. Our two aircraft at Readiness all day were scrambled once but had nothing to report when they came in. Another Squadron from our Wing arrived here today.

20/09/43

F/Lt. CARPENTER, DFC., and F/O. "CURLY" HENDERSON being "fed up" with stooge trips over ITALY, decided to carry out a recce over VALONA (ALBANIA) soon after dawn today. They reported only eight multi-engine aircraft on the L.G. there, but were greeted with plenty of heavy and light A.A. Two of our aircraft patrolled base from 0630 to 0750 and again from 0735 to 0835 but were unable to repeat yesterdays performance in contacting a HUN aircraft. We were released for the rest of the day and while a few pilots paid a visit to BRINDISI, most of them had a riotous outing in TARANTO. One particular house of entertainment was the source of much fun and games. In the mess at night we were pleased to have our GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINCOME, DSO., DFC., and BAR, and WING COMMANDER DUNCAN SMITH, DSO., DFC., and BAR. Our C.O., S/Ldr. HUMPHREYS, brought two ladies from TARANTO to join the party and we all had a very happy evening.

21/09/43

From dawn until 0845 we kept two aircraft patrolling base in the hope of intercepting an enemy recce plane but it did not come over. Also before breakfast, the Squadron carried out a sweep over FOGGIA and BOVINO and later we maintained a standing patrol over the airfield to cover the landing of the A.O.C.-in-C. in a DC 3. This aircraft was afterwards escorted to BRINDISI by two of our pilots. There was a patrol by two aircraft between BARI and BARLETTA in the afternoon and eight aircraft, operating from GIOIA carried out a patrol of the AVELLINO area. In this last show,

six F/W 190's were sighted three quarters of a mile away and at 1,000 feet above our aircraft; five of them half-rolled and dived for the "deck" while the other remained up but was too far away for interception.

22/09/43

"B" Flight moved over to GIOIA this morning to assist the SERVICING COMMANDS there, now that our aircraft are using the L.G. as a forward base. It is expected that the whole Squadron will move forward in the next day or two. Twice this morning, two of our aircraft carried out uneventful patrols over BARI and after noon, at Squadron strength, we swept the FOGGIA area.

GIOIA

23/09/43

The Squadron moved up to the pleasant airfield at GIOIA this morning and we kept two aircraft at Standby for local defence. These aircraft were scrambled at noon and after intercepting a DC 3 were ordered to "pancake"! Sections of four aircraft made three sweeps over the FOGGIA network in the afternoon and it was evident from the reports of ground observation by the pilots that the HUN was preparing to evacuate the area.

24/09/43

While a section of four aircraft swept over FOGGIA at dawn, another Section patrolled between BARI and BARLETTA but neither saw any sign of enemy aircraft. There were two more

uneventful patrols at BARI and another three sweeps over FOGGIA during the day. 30 plus Ju 88's were reported well dispersed between FOGGIA SATELLITES 2 and 9 but on closer inspection they proved to be unserviceable. A few pilots, off duty for the day, visited the seaside town of BARI and received a grand welcome from the inhabitants.

25/09/43

We were at 30 minutes all day today and the only flying done was in the nature of air tests of aircraft. In the afternoon a "liberty waggon" took 30 airmen to BARI for a swim.

26/09/43

There was no Operational flying today. Another truck load of pilots and airmen spent a happy afternoon in BARI.

27/09/43

The great news of the day was the award of the DFC., to our C.O., S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, and to P/O. R. PROBERT (who left us at the beginning of the month on expiration of his tour). The Squadron was at "60 minutes" all day and was not required for operations.

28/09/43

For one more day here was no operational flying. F/O. K. SISSONS took a party into BARI and was successful in buying some 300 bottles of beer in time for the Pilots' Mess to celebrate the award of the DFC., to our C.O. Some pilots from 417 SQUADRON and the

members of the Sergeants' Mess were invited together with several officers from Wing and no difficulty was experienced in sinking our available supplies of liquor.

29/09/43

In pairs, we maintained a patrol over shipping in BRINDISI and TARANTO harbour this morning. The ADJUTANT, F/Lt. G.L. TRAVIS, went into BARI with our empty bottles and tried to buy a supply of beer for our airmen but was informed that the NAAFI had taken over the brewery. Now we shall probably have to wait six months for them to get half a bottle each!

30/09/43

Our state was "60 minutes" today but 11 of our aircraft, led by WING COMMANDER SMITH did a "Balbe" with 145 SQUADRON over BARI. We have been warned to have our "A" party ready to move off tomorrow morning so we should be able to get some more active "ops" at the beginning of October. This month we have carried out 424 operational sorties involving 541 hours 25 minutes and 166 non-operational sorties with a total of 115 hours 35 minutes.

01/10/43

Our congratulations to W.O. C.F. Brown on being awarded the BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL. After an early breakfast our "A" Party moved off towards FOGGIA but at BARI they were held up for five hours to allow an army division convoy to move up. They reached a position eight miles East of FOGGIA, made rendezvous with WING

H.Q. and camped down awaiting further instructions. There was no operational flying.

02/10/43

It was dawn when two of our aircraft took off to patrol BRINDISI and shortly afterwards another pair patrolled the FOGGIA area. A total of 20 sorties were flown over the Northern Sector of the Bomb line in the region of LAKE VARANO but no enemy aircraft were seen.

03/10/43

Five patrols, totalling 22 sorties were flown between LAKE VARANO and SAN SEVERO covering our forward troops. F/Sgt. SAVILL was forced to belly-land at TORREMAGGIORE owing to engine trouble on the first show but he got back unhurt, riding part of the way on a mule and the rest of the journey in a Jeep.

04/10/43

The WING maintained a continuous patrol in the TERMOLI area and we did five shows, each with a Section of four aircraft, during the day. Other Squadrons met and successfully dealt with the few enemy aircraft encountered but we were out of luck, not seeing any sign of the HUN when we were on patrol. "A" Party moved on to the airfield at TORTORELLA this morning and set up camp on what was SATELLITE No. 2 of the FOGGIA network.

TORTORELLA

05/10/43

Two Sections of four aircraft took off from GIOIA for patrols over the TERMOLI area and landed at TORTORELLA and the remainder of our planes flew up during the morning. From the new airfield two more patrols were carried out without incident.

06/10/43

“B” Party left GIOIA soon after dawn and arrived at TORTORELLA just after noon. We flew a total of 43 sorties in patrols over TERMOLI area and a message of appreciation was received from the EIGHTH ARMY in which it was stated that an enemy counter-attack had been foiled by the RAF. We were giving indirect cover to KITTYHAWKS which flew a total of 408 sorties and destroyed 57 enemy M.T. and damaged 70 more.

07/10/43

Six aircraft patrolled the TERMOLI area before breakfast but after they landed the airfield was made unserviceable by heavy rain. We were delighted to receive news from the B.P.S.O. that F/O. BRENDAN BAKER, reported missing on the 16th AUGUST, is a P.O.W. in German hands.

08/10/43

The airfield was still unserviceable throughout the day. Yesterday we were delighted to hear that F/O. BRENDAN BAKER was a Prisoner Of War, but today's developments gave us joy beyond

description. At 1700 hours a phone message from 26 A.D. R. U. said that “ a pilot by the name of BAKER has landed here and would appreciate it if transport can be sent to pick him up!” We found him at the entrance to FOGGIA MAIN L.G. wearing his grey sweater and battle dress trousers looking as though he had just landed from an “ops” trip. Before being shot down on the 16th AUGUST, he had destroyed two Mc 202's. After baling out, he swam for a mile toward the shore and was picked up by a rowing boat. Suffering from shrapnel wounds in the leg, he spent the night in a Regimental Sick Quarters at GIOIA TAURO. Next morning he was taken to a hospital at LAUREANA and he remained there until the 18th AUGUST — the day SICILY was finally conquered — when all wounded were sent back to a hospital at COSENZA. He was there only two days before being moved to NAPLES when a raid was in progress so he spent the night in an Air Raid Shelter. Next morning found him in a P.O.W. Camp at CARUA, but after one night there, on the 25th AUGUST, he was taken to a hospital at CASERTA. There he remained in bed and, when our troops entered NAPLES and the walking wounded were evacuated, he hid in a tunnel until the HUNS had gone. On the afternoon of the 5th OCTOBER a recce Jeep of the 2/5th QUEENS arrived and the BRITISH FLAG was hoisted over the Hospital. That night the MEDICAL CORPS of the “BLACK CATS” took over and it was on the afternoon of the 7th that an ambulance arrived to take him to NAPLES. There was an opportunity to get home to ENGLAND but he was anxious to rejoin 92 and was flown in a DC 3 to FOGGIA.

With the Squadron mail tonight was a letter for “BREN” BAKER — from the ENGLAND RVENUE!

09/10/43

During the day we did 24 sorties in maintaining a standing patrol over our forward troops to the west of TERMOLI and, in addition, two sections of four aircraft escorted formations of BALTIMORES which attacked a target at PALATA.

10/10/43

This day was the fourth anniversary of the Squadron's birthday and our pilots were anxious to make an addition to our score. They were not disappointed. During a patrol in the TERMOLI area an aircraft was sighted three miles away and 2,000 feet below flying North East over TERMOLI. Two aircraft were sent to investigate and on their report that the aircraft was a DORNIER, the remainder of our formation joined them in the attack. In all, five of our pilots fired; they were F/Lt. NICHOLLS, DFC., F/O. WIHAK, F/O. FAKHRY, F/Sgt. McKAY and F/Sgt. BRISTER. The enemy aircraft was shot down into the sea five miles West of ISOLE TERMOLI after four of the crew had baled out. Most unfortunately, F/Sgt. McKAY was shot down by return fire from the Do 17Z and he is missing. For the remainder of the day our pilots searched the area for him and escorted a WALRUS there. Three of the enemy's crew were picked up alive but there was no sign of F/Sgt. McKAY we regret to say. A special dinner was served at night and a party was held in the Airmen's Mess. We were honoured by the presence of our former FLIGHT COMMANDER, now GROUP CAPTAIN

BRIAN KINGCOME, DSO., DFC., and BAR and WING COMMANDER DUNCAN SMITH, DSO., DFC., and BAR. It is worthy of note that we have with us eight of the original members of the Squadron. It was a very successful “get together” night. The Squadron score now stands at 283½ destroyed, 103 probably destroyed and 156 damaged.

11/10/43

At dawn, we had a patrol of eight aircraft over our forward troops West of TERMOLI and, before breakfast, another formation of the same number took off to maintain cover in the area. The weather deteriorated during the morning and we did no further flying apart from a weather recce late in the day.

12/10/43

Owing to heavy rain which fell during last night, the airfield was unserviceable. The Squadron was kept at “30 minutes” but there was no flying.

13/10/43

Thirty-six sorties were flown by sections of four aircraft over our forward troops to the West of TERMOLI. No enemy planes were encountered.

14/10/43

Our state has been “60 minutes” all day. The only flying was an air test by F/O. BRENDAN BAKER — his first “flip” since being taken P.O.W. Some of our pilots recently bought some pigs and it was

decided to kill some today to provide a good evening meal. As guests, we entertained WING COMMANDER DUNCAN SMITH, DSO., DFC., and BAR, S/Ldr. LANCE WADE, DFC., and 2 BARS, and S/Ldr. SKALSKI, DFC., and 2 BARS, F/Lt. W. ALLEN, F/O. D. KERR and F/O. D. STEWART. Some NAAFI stores arrived today and each member of the Squadron had one bottle of beer and a bar of chocolate. It seemed strange that the NAAFI took over the brewery at BARI, last month, our beer comes from SCOTLAND.

15/10/43

There was no operational flying today.

16/10/43

From dawn we have kept two Sections at Readiness. Three times during the day they were scrambled to the TERMOLI and MANFREDONIA areas but no enemy aircraft were sighted. Before lunch a Squadron formation swept westwards of CAMPOBASSO to VASTO but met no opposition. Two of our planes escorted two destroyers proceeding North East from BARI until relieved by 145 Squadron.

17/10/43

We were at "30 minutes" today and no flying was carried out.

TIRIOLO

18/10/43

Our 'A' Party left at first light to go to TIRIOLO airfield, the remainder of the Squadron left after mid-day and camp was firmly established there during the afternoon. Two sections of two aircraft escorted two destroyers going to BARI from a point just East of VIESTE before breakfast. On arriving at TIRIOLO airfield we had four aircraft at Readiness but they were not required. We have acquired a large number of chairs from FOGGIA and both the Pilots' and Airmen's Messes are more comfortable than they have been for many months.

19/10/43

Dawn Readiness again! It was mid-day before the first Section was scrambled and, after intercepting a P.R.U. SPITFIRE, they patrolled between TERMOLI and base at 32,000 feet without incident. Four of our SPITFIRE VIII's with eight of 417, led by WING COMMANDER DUNCAN SMITH, DSO., DFC., and BAR, escorted 36 BOSTONS which bombed a target at BOJANO. In the afternoon a Section was scrambled to intercept bogey which proved to be another P.R.U. SPITFIRE!

20/10/43

At Squadron strength we escorted 36 BOSTONS which bombed a target West of TERMOLI before breakfast. There were no further operations.

21/10/43

There was no flying today but we were kept at "30 minutes." F/Lt. B.L. GARNER has been posted to us with effect from 22nd SEPTEMBER. A very successful game of "TOMBOLA" was held in the Airmen's Mess tonight.

22/10/43

Throughout the day we have maintained a patrol with two aircraft at 22 – 30,000 feet over base with the object of intercepting an enemy recce plane. Apart from the interception of friendly aircraft, the patrols were uneventful. In a football match this afternoon our side fought a good game with a WING team. The result was a draw 1 — 1.

23/10/43

We were released today and the only flying done was a practice flight by F/Sgt. BUCHANAN, who has rejoined the Squadron after being detached for a few weeks. The football match against a strong "ACK-ACK" side this afternoon was drawn after each side had scored once. The airmen held a Whist drive in their mess tonight, the standard of play was high with the top scores of 145 and 141 recorded.

24/10/43

We carried out two "stooge" patrols over the FOGGIA area today. The first was with four aircraft at 20,000 feet hoping to intercept a recce plane and the other with 12 aircraft stepped up from 10-20,000 feet to cover the landing of LIGHTNINGS at FOGGIA No. 1

AIRFIELD. WING COMMANDER DUNCAN SMITH, DSO., DFC., and BAR, dined with us this evening.

25/10/43

During the forenoon eight sorties were carried out in patrols over base to intercept a HUN recce kite which decided to use discretion and kept out of our way. Later, 12 of our aircraft escorted 24 BOSTONS and 12 BALTIMORES which dropped about 90,000 pounds of bombs on a target 10 miles N.W. of VASTO. A nursing sister, friend of our MEDICAL OFFICER (F/Lt. L. HOLT), was entertained in our Mess tonight. Seeing the admirable arrangements made for her comfort by the ADJUTANT, she decided to sleep on our camp and thus made history. This is the first recorded instance of our hospitality being fully accepted by a lady!

26/10/43

It was our turn for Dawn Readiness today. Three times our aircraft were scrambled to the TERMOLI area but each patrol proved uneventful. During a patrol ordered over the same area F/O. HAZEL and F.O. DIBDEN successfully intercepted a Me 210 flying at 23,000 feet. They clung to it as it dived and it was last seen at 2,000 feet with black smoke belching from the starboard engine. The two pilots shared it as Damaged. The airmen held an open night in their mess where a large crowd gathered for Tombola.

27/10/43

An unfavourable report on the weather was given by F/Lt. HARDS, DFC., DFM., and Sgt. KING, who took off at first light on a recce of the ISERNIA area. In consequence, further operations in the nature of bomber-escort were cancelled. The most interesting football match we have seen for a long time was played between the PILOTS' MESS and our M.T. SECTION this afternoon.

Although the pilots lost by 3 — 1 they had much more of the play than the score would suggest. A feature of the Squadron life during the past two years has been the exhibition in the Airmen's Mess of a strip cartoon by LAC. F. LUND, of MIANTENANCE SECTION. At last we have been fortunate in securing a copy. It is topical, as usual, and deals with today's football match.

28/10/43

In spite of adverse weather conditions, a shipping reconnaissance was called for this morning. Four of our aircraft flew at deck level scouring the sea between ANCONA and PRESCARA and then, crossing the coast near TERMOLI they became split in dense cloud. After one hour and 45 minutes flying, W/O K. WARREN landed safely at base, but there was no sign of the others. Later we had news that F/Lt. J.H. NICHOLLS, DFC., had made a perfect landing on a strip near TERMOLI, but F/O. A. SAYLE and F/Sgt. ASKEY are still missing.

29/10/43

It was a great blow to us to hear that the body of F/o. ALLAN SAYLE had been found in the CAMPOBASSO area. He joined us on 22nd MAY this year and showed great promise as a fighter pilot. ALLAN had a loveable nature which had endeared him to everyone with whom he had contact. He will be sadly missed. There is still no news of F/Sgt. M. ASKEY and during the day searches were carried out by our aircraft for him. Throughout the morning we maintained a standing patrol over TERMOLI but very heavy rain later on put an end to operational flying. The COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, DFC., delighted us at dinner with the news of the award of the DFC., to F/O. BRENDAN BAKER. This was duly celebrated.

30/10/43

There is still no news of F/Sgt. M. ASKEY. E were at "30 minutes" state from early morning with the possibility of a bomber escort show but adverse weather conditions caused its cancellation.

31/10/43

Bad weather persisted and no flying was done. We said farewell to F/O. BRENDAN BAKER, DFC., F/O. G. WILSON, F/O. E.S.S. DICKS-SHERWOOD, DFC., and W/O. S.R. FRY on the expiration of their tours. A large crowd gathered around our football pitch to watch a most amusing game in which the Pilots beat the Senior NCO's by 8 — 1. It was appreciated when our COMMANDING

OFFICER, S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, DFC., turned out for the pilots, with F/Sgt. F. BRISTER in the centre, Sgt. KING and the C.O. as inside forwards and F/Sgt. SAVILL and F/Sgt. PERCIVAL on the wings, they had a formidable forward line. With 355 sorties this month, 420 hours 20 minutes have been clocked on operational flying and in 74 non-operational sorties the hours total 35 hours 10 minutes.

01/11/43

From dawn until mid-day we maintained a standing patrol over our forward troops along the TRIGNO RIVER. A Ju 88 was chased by F/O. K.N.R. SISSONS and F/Sgt. G. BUCHANAN from THERMOLI to POPOLI, but the enemy aircraft had advantage of height and escaped in cloud. With four aircraft of 417 SQUADRON we escorted three Squadrons of BOSTONS which unloaded their bombs at CARPINONE, and, while they were airborne, four more of our pilots gave cover to a Squadron of WARHAWKS on an anti-shipping patrol to SPLIT, JUGO-SLAVIA. They had the satisfaction of seeing a direct hit on an enemy freighter.

02/11/43

At first light we had a Section of four aircraft patrolling over a FOGGIA airfield where a large number of LIGHTNINGS were re-fuelling and we kept up this patrol until lunch time. Eight aircraft, with four of 417 SQUADRON, escorted three Squadrons of BOSTONS, which did some excellent bombing of enemy positions at DOGLIOLA. There was no flying after noon, but excitement was provided by our Squadron football team which won a great victory

over the representatives of 601 SQUADRON. The score was 3 — 0. SERGEANT PILOTS BUGDEN and F.M.P. HAMSON joined us today from 244 WING TRAINING FLIGHT.

03/11/43

Our sorties totalled 40 today and were flown in patrols over our forward troops along the TRIGNO RIVER, and in escorts to BOSTONS and BALTIMORES which attacked targets at ALFEDENA and PALMOLI. During our last patrol four Me 109's were sighted being chased by SPITFIRES of another Squadron. F/O. "CURLY" HENDERSON joined in the attack and managed to get in a couple of bursts from 400 yards before the HUNS gained sanctuary in thick cloud, but he makes no claim.

04/11/43

We carried out a dawn patrol over our forward troops WEST of the RIVER TRIGNO and maintained the cover until 0800 hours, but bad weather then put an end to flying for the day.

05/11/43

Weather was bad again this morning over base and two of our aircraft, which carried out a recce of the VASTO area, reported rain and low cloud over the bomb line. At mid-day a patrol of four aircraft covered our forward troops and another patrol was carried out at last light. Both were without incident.

COMMANDING OFFICER MACKIE

06/11/43

There was no flying during the morning, but two patrols were carried out over the mouth of the SANGRO RIVER in the afternoon. There was no sign of any enemy aircraft. S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, arrived today to take over command of the Squadron. A very successful Whist drive was held in the Airmen's Mess to which members of the Pilots' and Senior NCO's Messes were invited. The booby prize was won by one of our ground officers! S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, DFC., held a party in the Pilots' Mess and the presence of GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINCOME, DSO., DFC., and BAR, S/Ldr. LANCE WADE, DFC., and Two BARS, S/Ldr. TURNER, DFC., and BAR, MAJOR ASTLER, DFC., and S/Ldr. FORD, DFC., ensured a happy evening.

07/11/43

Throughout the day we had a section of four aircraft on patrol along the RIVER SANGRO, but there was no enemy activity. It is amusing to see how well some of our men are getting organised to cope with the cold damp weather. One of our Flight Sections has made a useful stove but ran out of fuel so a man was detailed to stop a train which runs nearby and for a couple of cigarettes he obtained enough coal to last the day!

08/11/43

We carried out three patrols over our forward troops without incident this morning, but bad weather put a stop to flying later on.

On a rain-soaked pitch our pilots beat 601 SQUADRON pilots at football. This was an "away" game but the Squadron turned out in force to support its team.

09/11/43

Rain continued to fall during the night but, although our dispersal areas were waterlogged, the airfield remained serviceable. Weather conditions over the forward areas were unfavourable, however, and although we had eight aircraft at Readiness after lunch they did not take off. News was received that our INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, F/O. G.J. CORNISH, had been MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES

10/11/43

From mid-day we kept a section of four aircraft at Readiness and F/Lt. HARDS, DFC., DFM., with Sgt. KING did a weather recce but brought back an unfavourable report so there was no further flying.

11/11/43

There was only one patrol carried out by four aircraft along the SANGRO RIVER. Weather in the forward areas was bad with very low cloud and, although we had aircraft at Readiness, there was no further flying.

12/11/43

The four patrols over our forward troops today proved uneventful. It was a clear day and our pilots were hopeful that some HUN aircraft would be airborne but they were disappointed.

13/11/43

Our only operation today was by eight aircraft which deloused for BOSTONS and BALTIMORES attacking a target at PALENA. Our COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, with five other officers accepted the invitation to join the Whist drive held in the Airmen's Mess tonight. There were 18 tables and everyone spent a very happy evening.

14/11/43

We had two scrambles early this morning. On the first an unidentified aircraft was spotted very high over CERIGNOLA but it was impossible for our Section to intercept it. We learned later that it was a friendly aircraft. There was one patrol during the forenoon along the RIVER SANGRO and a Ju 88 was sighted over PENNA POINT at 19,000 feet. It was already well ahead and by the time our Section had climbed from 14,000 feet it had drawn away too far for interception. Other aircraft were kept at Readiness until last light but were not sent off.

15/11/43

Patrols had been arranged to keep our aircraft busy throughout the morning but once more our forward areas were shrouded in low cloud and operations were cancelled. Soon after mid-day the

Squadron was released. We congratulate F/Lt. J. CARPENTER, DFC., who left us today to become a FLIGHT COMMANDER in 145 SQUADRON

16/11/43

The weather remained clear over the forward areas today and we maintained a patrol of four aircraft over the RIVER SANGRO throughout the day. Not once was there any sign of enemy air activity.

17/11/43

After an early morning weather recce we carried out two uneventful patrols over our forward troops but rain storms put an end to flying from mid-day. In the evening a large number of visitors including GROUP CAPTAIN BRIAN KINCOME, DSO., DFC., and BAR, WING COMMANDER DUNCAN SMITH, DSO., DFC., and BAR, S/Ldr. S. TURNER, DFC., and BAR, MAJOR ASTLER, DFC., and S/Ldr. DISNEY, joined the officers, pilots, and senior NCO's of this Squadron at a farewell party to our late COMMNDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. P.H. HUMPHREYS, DFC. To wind up a merry, noisy, party the GROUP CAPTAIN spoke of the excellent record of the Squadron and said how ably S/Ldr. HUMPHREYS had led us in the campaign through SICILY and in ITALY, upholding and enhancing the traditions of 92. On our behalf he also officially welcomed S/Ldr. E.D MACKIE, DFC., and BAR.

18/11/43

In an early morning patrol this morning our aircraft sighted two Me 109's but they were too far away for interception and we lost sight of them against the background of the hills. There was another patrol along the SANGRO and two aircraft covered Tac/R. SPITFIRES on a job over ROCCHETTA but no more enemy aircraft were seen.

19/11/43

The airfield was unserviceable owing to heavy rain. "A" Party moved to the TERMOLI area and found their airfield at CANNE water-logged.

20/11/43

There was no flying owing to further rain.

21/11/43

"B" Party were ready to move but the airfield remained unserviceable and our aircraft could not take off.

22/11/43

There were five patrols over our forward troops with Sections of four aircraft and two of our pilots escorted a couple of BALTIMORES which dropped leaflets near CASTELVECEBIA. The pilots all landed at CANNE after the last three patrols. Their kits arrived for them at 2200 hours.

CANNE

23/11/43

"B" Party arrived at CANNE and found a camp site two miles from the airfield and on the only stretch of ground which was not water-logged, so "A" Party dug themselves out of their site to join them. There were only two patrols today along the SANGRO and each proved uneventful.

24/11/43

Six patrols were carried out today starting at dawn. All were without incident until the last patrol when two enemy aircraft were sighted flying North along the RIVER SANGRO at 3,000 feet. With a whoop of joy at getting the "jump" on a couple of F/W 190's, F/Sgt. G. BUCHANAN dived from 8,000 feet, closed to 250 yards and fired two bursts at one of them. The army confirmed that this kite crashed although on returning "Buck" only claimed a 'probable.' The leader of the Section, F/Lt. NICHOLLS, DFC., had detached himself to investigate other bogies reported by controller which proved to be friendly aircraft.

25/11/43

Our pilots were "on their toes" when they took off for the two patrols today but they did not encounter any HUNS.

26/11/43

Dawn again saw a Section of four taking off for a patrol over our troops along the SANGRO RIVER and two more Sections patrolled after noon in the same area.

27/11/43

Patrols were over our forward troops and continued throughout the day. Bogies were reported but on investigation they proved to be friendly aircraft.

28/11/43

A formation of ten F/W 190's and Me 109's attempted to sneak through our defences this morning only to be met by a Section of four of our aircraft over TORINO DI SANGRO at 15,000 feet. F/Lt. J.H. NICHOLLS, DFC., destroyed a F/W 190, W.O. K. WARREN destroyed a Me 109, whilst F/O. DIBDEN and Sgt. PEACOCK damaged a F/W 190 apiece. Two more patrols after lunch were uneventful.

29/11/43

Only eight of our aircraft took off today. Two of them escorted two SPITFIRE V's of 601 SQUADRON on an armed recce To PESCARA, but no target was found. The formation of six was scrambled to intercept aircraft which were later reported to be friendly.

30/11/43

Lt. A. SACHS added one F/W 190 destroyed and another damaged to our score during the first patrol today, when our Section of four

met 10 plus F/W 190's and Me 109's over the RIVER SANGRO. The number of aircraft on patrol was increased to eight for the next two shows and just after mid-day F/Sgt. G. BUCHANAN and F/Sgt. F.E. BRISTER dived with six F/W 190's at 80,000 feet over CASOLI. F/Sgt. BUCHANAN fired a short burst at one which turned on its back and dropped vertically but he made no claim. F/Sgt. BRISTER was forced to bale out, but he is reported safe by the ARMY who added that two aircraft cashed together. We are awaiting the return of F/Sgt. BRISTER before putting in a claim. In the last show of the day, S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR led six of our pilots on patrols. Two bogies were reported at 14,000 feet flying towards the mouth of the RIVER SANGRO and F/O. "CURLY" HENDERSON with Sgt. PEACOCK were detached to intercept them. They spotted a F/W 190 apparently on a Tac/R, escorted by two Me 109's at 13,000 feet. F/O. "CURLY" HENDERSON destroyed the F/W 190 bringing the Squadron score to 280½ confirmed, 105 probables and 160 damaged. F/Lt. D.L.G. TURVEY rejoined the Squadron today after being in charge of the WING TRAINING FLIGHT for six months. We flew 394 operational sorties this month, involving 468 hours 53 minutes; 51 non-operational sorties added another 31 hours flying time. The attached "write-up" by visiting pressmen on the occasion of the Squadron's fourth birthday, was circulated for newspapers in ENGLAND.

01/12/43

Eight of our pilots took off at dawn to patrol along the west side of the RIVER SANGRO, but it was apparently too early for the HUN. A patrol of four aircraft at mid-day also was uneventful, but after lunch our Section spotted eighteen unidentified aircraft about a mile away which dived through a gap in the clouds West of PENNA POINT. Our leader, F/Lt. J.H.NICHOLS, DFC., vectored aircraft of 145 SQUADRON on to them as we had just been relieved.

02/12/43

Once again, our dawn patrol was without incident. After four of our pilots had escorted two TAC?R. SPITFIRES to PESCARA, eight of our aircraft, led by the COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, went out to patrol over the forward troops. On their way out they heard the controller reporting bandits at 27,000 feet over CASOLI. Six Me 109's were spotted a couple of miles away diving from 20,000 and the leader closed to 350 yards but was unable to get into a good position. W.O. KEN WARREN after chasing one down in a dive to 200 feet opened fire from 200 yards and claims a damaged. There were two more patrols in which no HUNS were sighted and a section escorted two destroyers on their way from PENNA POINT to PESCARA.

03/12/43

Just after midnight last night, F/Sgt. F.E. BRISTER, who baled out on 30th NOVEMBER, returned to the Squadron. He claims one F/W

190 destroyed on that day. We had only one patrol of eight aircraft along the RIVER SANGRO today, but we made the most of it. Yellow Section, led by the COMMANDING OFFICER, climbed to 19,000 feet and were no sooner on patrol than they sighted 12 Me 109 fighters and fighter-bombers on their port side at 18,000 feet flying east. The C.O. fired at two of them, but was unable to concentrate because the HUN, for once, was inclined to mix it. He closed to 300 yards astern of another and this time made sure of it. It crashed on the side of a hill West of CASOLI. Meanwhile, Sgt. F.M.P. HANSON, gave a burst at another which slowed down. He closed to 50 yards and the enemy aircraft burst into flames before crashing near CASOLI. Red Section, at 10,000 feet patrolled with no incident, apart from seeing the "flamer" go in. We congratulate our "parent" Squadron, No. 601, on reaching their 200 destroyed today. S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, F/Lt. M.S. HARDS, DFC., DFM., and F/Lt. J.H. NICHOLLS, DFC., were invited to a party to celebrate this success in 601 Squadron Pilots' Mess tonight

04/12/43

There were three patrols over the RIVER SANGRO today, but there were no HUNS in the sky, possibly because low cloud covered the hills to the west of our forward troops.

05/12/43

Our first patrol with eight aircraft, which were airborne before breakfast, was uneventful, but just after mid-day while Yellow Section were investigating a formation of "bogies" flying toward

PESCARA; Red Section met 25 plus F/W 190's and Me 109's. Sgt. J.H. PEACOCK damaged a F/W 190 and Lt. A. SACHS destroyed two F/W 190's and probably destroyed another. His story is an epic. He positioned himself behind the 12 plus fighter-bombers and F/O. F WIHAK with Sgt. J.H. PEACOCK, attacked the fighter cover. After destroying one F/W 190 with a one-second burst from 150 yards Lt. SACHS saw another on the tail of a SPITFIRE so he turned into it firing a 30° deflection shot, then fired again from point blank range astern. The aircraft blew up and portions hit SACHS' windscreen, smashing it, while another large piece struck his starboard wing. F/W 190's were then diving on him from both sides and one shell exploded on his tailplane blowing off his starboard elevator. He turned towards another F/W 190 which was attacking him at point blank range on his port side and felt a jar as he collided with it. The enemy aircraft dived away out of control minus its fin and rudder. The attack continued and finally, after his elevator and aileron controls were useless, Lt. SACHS was forced to bale out. This success brought the number of enemy aircraft destroyed by this Squadron since it left ENGLAND to 100, while the total score is now 293½ confirmed. "On to the three hundred!" was the slogan of the eight pilots as they took off for the final patrol of the day and they were not disappointed because the COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, who was leading, destroyed a Me 109 which went down in flames. Eleven aircraft destroyed in eleven days without losing a pilot!

06/12/43

At dawn three of our aircraft took off to patrol over the RIVER SANGRO, but with the cloud base at 500 feet there, they returned after passing a weather report. The weather deteriorated during the day and we had four aircraft at Readiness for local defence but they did not take off.

07/12/43

Our two morning patrols over the ORTONA area proved uneventful. It is hoped that the JERRY has not given up the air war on this front — we are most anxious to obtain our 300th destroyed before Christmas.

08/12/43

By way of change, after an early morning patrol, six of our pilots deloused for three Squadrons of MITCHELLS which bombed a target at AQUILA. After lunch two of our aircraft were scrambled for an interception, but did not sight any hostile aircraft. We finished off the day with an uneventful patrol.

09/12/43

There were three patrols over ORTONA area during the day. Just after noon our eight aircraft had a dog-fight over CHIETI with 25 plus F/W 190's and Me 109's, but results of our attacks were mostly unobserved, several of the pilots fired at two or three aircraft, but the only claim was by Lt. A. SACHS, who damaged a F/W 190. The WING was honoured by a visit from AIR CHIEF MARSHALL SIR CHARLES PORTAL accompanied by AIR CHIEF

MARSHALL SIR ARTHUR TEDDER and AIR MARSHAL CONINGHAM.

10/12/43

Thirty two sorties were flown on patrols over ORTONA, starting at dawn and ending at last light.

11/12/43

Owing to low cloud over the forward areas, the number of aircraft on each patrol was reduced to four and only eight of our pilots got off apart from a weather recce flown this afternoon. The report brought back then put an end to flying for the day. There was a very enjoyable Whist drive held in the Airmen's Mess tonight to which officers and senior NCO's were invited.

12/12/43

The weather was bad again today and after a weather recce only one patrol with four aircraft, was flown in the ORSOGNA area. Unfortunately, the HUN took a "dim view" of our SPITFIRES and opened up with flak which hit F/O. M.J. FAKHRY'S machine. He had to force land near PENNA POINT and received cuts in the head and leg.

13/12/43

There was an improvement in weather conditions and consequently patrols with eight aircraft were resumed. We had no excitement in our three trips.

14/12/43

It was dawn when eight of our pilots took off for a patrol over ORTONA and ORSOGNA, which proved uneventful. Two more patrols with four aircraft were flown during the morning, but at mid-day thick cloud covered the area from 2,000 feet so we were released for the afternoon.

15/12/43

With low cloud generally our patrols were flown with four aircraft only. Altogether twelve pilots took off but there was no HUN opposition.

16/12/43

Before breakfast, four of our aircraft on patrol encountered 16 enemy aircraft near CASOLI, but only Sgt. HANSON was able to get into position to open fire. He has made no claim but the Forward Controller reported that a Me 109 had crashed. The next Section patrolled without incident but it was decided to increase the number of kites to eight. This was a wise move because our formation, airborne just before lunch, had a dice with 20 F/W 190's. F/O. R. HAZEL damaged two of them and F/O. IVES damaged a third. There were too many around to allow our pilots to observe full results of their efforts. Again in the afternoon we met over 20 F/W 190's and Me 109 fighters and fighter-bombers. F/Lt. M.S. HARDS, DFC., DFM., probably destroyed a Me 109 while S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, and Sgt. HANSON damaged a Me 109 each.

17/12/43

Sixteen sorties were flown in uneventful patrols between ORTONA and GUADIAGRELE and a weather recce was flown over CAPRANO and CASSINO.

18/12/43

After a dawn weather recce over ORTE and FOSINONE, we had two patrols of eight aircraft over the forward troops. The COMMANDING OFFICER and seven other members of the Pilots' Mess accepted an invitation to attend a Whist Drive in the Airmen's Mess this evening. We congratulate F/Lt. M.S. HARDS, DFC., DFM., on being promoted to command No. 111 SQUADRON. F/Lt. J.F. EDWARDS, DFC., DFM., has been posted to us from No. 417 SQUADRON to take over "A" FLIGHT.

19/12/43

There was another early recce over ORTE and FROSINONE and then patrols were resumed after breakfast with four aircraft. Weather improved after mid-day and eight of our pilots took off but no enemy aircraft were airborne. It is hoped that we shall have some clear days so that the HUN will be coaxed into the air for our pilots to reach the 300 destroyed before Christmas.

20/12/43

Our pilots did three patrols between ORTONA and CASOLI but met no enemy aircraft; some "bogies" were reported but they proved to

be friendly aircraft. The airmen have been busy decorating their mess for Christmas.

21/12/43

The weather was poor but patrols were flown throughout the day with four aircraft. Our pilots also carried out two weather recces over ORTE. There was an extra large attendance at the Whist Drive held in the Airmen's Mess and special prizes were presented by the COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. E.D.MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, at the end of a most enjoyable evening.

22/12/43

Our three patrols over the positions of our forward troops were carried out by formations of eight aircraft. News was brought back by our pilots that Units of the EIGHTH ARMY had entered ORTONA. It is with much regret that we record the death of 1072451 LAC. STOUT, K.H., Equipment assistant, who died late this evening in No. 19 C.C.S., TERMOLI, from injuries sustained in a road accident which occurred during this afternoon. His pleasing disposition and jovial manner will be much missed by the Squadron as a whole.

23/12/43

There was very low cloud when eight of our pilots took off for the early patrol today and four of whom were sent back to land at TRIGNO landing ground after being airborne for just over half-an-hour. Our airfield became shrouded in mist and, consequently, the other section was instructed to join the first one at TRIGNO L.G.

After a hearty breakfast with one of the SAAF SQUADRONS there, our pilots were able to return in pairs to base, but there was no more flying during the day.

24/12/43

After the usual dawn weather recce there was no chance of taking off for patrols owing to heavy rain and low cloud. In the afternoon we kept four aircraft at Readiness for local defence but they were not scrambled. The pilots and officers had their Christmas dinner this evening and a very fine meal it was. Pilots invited their crews in to the party after dinner and everyone had a merry time in 92 style!

25/12/43

Christmas day in sunny Italy! After breakfast four of our pilots carried out an uneventful patrol over ORTONA but low cloud and heavy rain caused the cancellation of the remainder of the flying programme. We did some Readiness in the afternoon but the pilots were released in time to assist the officers and senior NCO's in waiting on the airmen for their Christmas dinner. Each man had four bottles of beer to wash down the splendid meal of turkey, pork, plum pudding, mince pies and Christmas cake, and there was a parcel of 70 cigarettes on each plate. At night , the Adjutant (F/Lt. G.L. TRAVIS), F/O. J. LONGSTAFF, F/O. G.J. CORNISH, Sgt. HANSON and Sgt. BUGDEN carried out guard duties on the landing ground to allow the men to continue their celebrations.

26/12/43

Our aircraft on the dawn recce were unable to reach their objective owing to dense cloud and the four pilots which took off to patrol over ORTONA were recalled for the same reason. However, another recce was successfully carried out over ZARA in JUGO-SLAVIA where weather conditions were more favourable. Our airmen produced a very enjoyable concert, compèred by F/O. R. HAZEL, in their mess tonight. Lt. ALBERT SACHS, SAAF, left today being posted O.T.E.. He joined the Squadron at CASTEL BENITO and has since destroyed four enemy aircraft, probably destroyed two and damaged three.

27/12/43

A strong wind with gusts up to 50 miles an hour blew across the runway today and after our two "Jim Crow" aircraft had returned from a recce over AQUINO there was no more flying.

28/12/43

Our weather recce today took F/O. R. HAZEL and F/Sgt. PERCIVAL to METKOVIK in JUGO-SLAVIA. There were three patrols over ORTONA by Sections of four aircraft which met no opposition. In the late afternoon two of our pilots were scrambled to escort a DC 3 carrying GENERAL MONTGOMMERY to a landing strip beside the RIVER SANGRO.

29/12/43

In spite of a strong gusty wind, eight of our aircraft were airborne at first light to patrol between CASOLI and ORTONA. There was

low cloud over the forward areas so the number of aircraft on patrol was first reduced to four and later to two. The Squadron was released after lunch and the opportunity was taken to test the cannons on several of our "kites."

30/12/43

There was a considerable improvement in the weather today and early reces were flown over METKOVIK and ZARA. During the morning two patrols were flown by four aircraft over the ORTONA area, but with reports of HUN aircraft in the air, our last patrol was increased to eight. However, there was no sign of enemy aircraft.

31/12/43

The dawn weather recce took our pilots to FROSINONE. It was bright and clear over base when our formation of eight aircraft took off for a patrol over ORTONA and we had high hopes that contact would be made with the HUN, but we were doomed to disappointment. At mid-day, eight more pilots were airborne on patrol but the weather had deteriorated with cloud covering the area at 5,000 feet. We must wait for next year now to bring our total of aircraft destroyed to the 300 mark! This month our operational hours have reached 619 hours 50 minutes, involving 501 sorties, while 34 non-operational sorties were flown with a total of 19 hours 35 minutes. The Squadron is on the "top line," ready to uphold the reputation of 92 throughout the year 1944. May our efforts bring victory next year!

01/01/44

The sounds of revelry emitted by the dozen or so SCOTS on the Squadron were drowned by the roar of the gale which blew throughout the night. Fortunately, only four of our tents failed to withstand the storm but the occupants were soaked to the skin. The high wind continued throughout the day and flying was cancelled.

02/01/44

The weather recce this morning took our two "Jim Crow" aircraft to TERNI. Patrols were maintained over the ORTONA area by sections of four aircraft which carried out 16 sorties. In spite of an improvement in the weather, no enemy aircraft were encountered.

03/01/44

We awakened to a cloudless sky and the sun shone brightly all day. The dawn recce was over OMIS and TROGIR in JUGO-SALVIA and then 34 sorties were flown in patrols over our forward troops. At mid-day, three aircraft were spotted diving North-west past ORTONA and, as bomb-bursts were seen on the road three miles N.W. of that town they must have been hostile, but we lost sight of them against the background of the hills. No other enemy formations were seen.

04/01/44

After the dawn recce over TROGIR in JUGO-SLAVIA, we did two patrols with six aircraft over ORTONA. The weather was perfect after lunch and it was intended to put up eight aircraft in the

afternoon, but most unfortunately WO. K. SYMES crashed on take-off when his engine cut. He has been taken to hospital with a fractured frontal bone and lacerations of the scalp. The patrol was uneventful.

05/01/44

A strong gale was blowing across the runway all day and it was impossible for any aircraft to take off. FLYING OFFICER "HINDOO" HENDERSON has been posted to 601 SQUADRON as a FLIGHT COMMANDER. He takes with him our very best wishes for future success.

06/01/44

The gale continued throughout today and we had a slight snow storm. The Airmen's Mess was blown down during the night and two of their E.P.I.P. tents were torn to shreds. It is hoped that they will be able to obtain replacements without delay because their Mess has been so useful for the lectures and games which they have arranged.

07/01/44

For the third day in succession no flying was possible owing to a very strong cross wind.

08/01/44

At dawn with a clear sky, four of our pilots were airborne on patrol over ORTONA and they were relieved by four more. Later in the morning, the number was increased to six with two of the aircraft

flying independently at 15,000 feet. F/O. "CURLY" HENDERSON leading the pair spotted vapour trails over ORTONA and made contact with a Me 210 at 28,000 feet. He set the starboard engine on fire and saw pieces fall off from the port wing. It half-rolled and dived vertically but was not seen to crash so he has claimed it as "damaged." Patrols were maintained throughout the afternoon without incident bringing our total of sorties for the day to 32.

09/01/44

Thirty-four sorties were flown in uneventful patrols over our forward troops between ORTONA and the MAILELLA MOUNTAINS.

10/01/44

On the first "trip" today, F/Lt. J.F. EDWARDS, DFC., DFM., and F/Lt. B.L. GARNER, flying at 15,000 feet, had just commenced to patrol when they saw two Me 109's in a diving turn from 16,000 feet. F/Lt. GARNER destroyed one bringing our total confirmed to 295½. The only other patrol was without incident. In the afternoon four of our pilots were engaged in practice attacks on a formation of six BALTIMORES of No. 223 SQUADRON. Two performances were given in our Airmen's Mess by the RAF COMMAND BAND No. 3. Two packed "houses" expressed their appreciation of a most enjoyable concert.

11/01/44

(No entry for this day)

12/01/44

In perfect weather we continued to patrol over the battle area with formations of eight aircraft on two shows and with ten aircraft at mid-day. No enemy "kites" were encountered.

13/01/44

Squadron personnel queued up eagerly at "STORES" as soon as it was made known that the ribbon of our AFRICA STARS was available, and in a very short time proud chests were adorned with it. Only two patrols, with eight aircraft on each, were flown between ORTONA and GUADIAGRELE. The good news was received from ADVANCED H.Q. that the Me 210 which F/O. "CURLY" HENDERSON claimed as damaged on the 8th of this month, had crashed in our lines and a P.O.W. had been taken.

14/01/44

Eighteen sorties were flown in patrols over our forward troops and two pilots escorted a couple of destroyers which were steaming up the ADRIATIC from VIESTE.

15/01/44

Instructions were received that a reinforced "A" PARTY were to be prepared to move at first light tomorrow to a landing ground in the NAPLES area. Three patrols were flown today in poor visibility and no HUNS were reported.

16/01/44

THE WING convoy moved off at dawn and reached AVELLINO before dusk. Eighteen sorties were flown from CANNE L.G. without incident.

MARCIANISE L.G.

17/01/44

Leaving AVELLINO at first light, the convoy reached the new landing ground at MARCIANISE at 0930 hours. Six of our aircraft had been airborne on patrol on the 8th ARMY before the Squadron flew over to MARCIANISE. By the time the pilots landed, everything was ready for them; the Mess had been put up and the kits were in their tents.

18/01/44

There was no flying today, but eight of our pilots sat on readiness for over four hours during the afternoon. The aircraft are all ready for forthcoming operations.

19/01/44

Six of our aircraft were airborne to protect seven warships which were shelling enemy positions from the GULF OF GAETA.

20/01/44

To provide target cover to a formation of 12 MITCHELLS bombing near AVEZZANO, six of our pilots took off before noon but, although they remained over the area for 25 minutes, there was no

sign of the bombers. A truck took a party of our airmen to visit POMPEI in the afternoon.

21/01/44

This morning another party of our men were taken on a tour of the ruins of POMPEI. After lunch six of our aircraft gave target cover to a formation of MITCHELLS. Some accurate bombing of AVEZZANO was reported by our pilots. There was a meeting of all the WING pilots and OFFICERS held at 417 SQUADRON'S Mess at which GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINCOME, DSO., DFC., and BAR, gave details of impending ARMY operations.

22/01/44

It is interesting to note that our Squadron was again called upon to provide the first cover over our invasion forces. When SICILY and ITALY were invaded we were proud that 92 were off at dawn patrolling our beach-heads and in darkness today 18 of our pilots took off to patrol over the BRITISH and AMERICAN Forces which had landed 50 miles SOUTH OF ROME this morning. To our horror the tenth aircraft to take off struck a tree and burst into flames on hitting the ground and F/O. C.J. DIBDEN died from injuries and burns. He was a most popular pilot and will be sadly missed. Patrols over the beaches and the convoy from PONZIANE ISLANDS to the landing were continued throughout the day and our contribution involved 38 sorties. Unfortunately we made no contact with any enemy aircraft. A total of 1,346 sorties were flown today by the TACTICAL AIR FORCE and, besides damage inflicted on his transport, nine enemy aircraft were destroyed.

23/01/44

We were disappointed that our role had to be changed for today because we had high hopes of getting to grips with the HUN. As it was, 12 of our aircraft only, took off and they escorted 36 Medium Bombers which dropped a concentrated load of bombs on VALLECORSA without opposition.

24/01/44

Soon after dawn, ten of our pilots took off; six of them to patrol over the convoy supplying our troops in the ANZIO area and four to patrol over the troops themselves. No enemy aircraft were encountered and it is distressing to have to record the loss of F/O. L.B. McDERMOTT (RAAF) who, after being airborne for one hour and forty minutes, was forced to bale out owing to engine trouble. A continuous search, involving 16 sorties, was made for him in the GULF OF GAETA without success. "MAC" joined us at the end of the NORTH AFRICAN "show" and has proved himself a most reliable and steady pilot — our hope is that he may have been picked up by a ship before our aircraft and the A.S.R. launch began their search. In the afternoon, seven of our aircraft patrolled over the ANZIO battle area without incident.

25/01/44

Twenty-six sorties were flown over the convoy and battle area near ANZIO but we made no contacts with enemy aircraft. Soon after mid-day our pilots sighted eight Me 109's being chased by

SPITFIRES and WARHAWKS but they flew into cloud before we could get near.

26/01/44

From a half-hour before dawn until 0915 hours, 12 pilots were on Readiness but with low cloud it appeared unlikely that they would take off. However, after lunch, 11 aircraft were airborne on patrol over the ANZIO area. F/Sgt. F.E.BRISTER was unable to operate the cock on his main fuel tank and had to force-land on the strip near NETTUNO. He called up on the R/T to say that he was unhurt but it may be some days before he can rejoin us.

27/01/44

A total of 73½ hours were flown by our pilots today in 42 sorties on patrol over the ANZIO battle area. The depleted ground crews — a number were left at CANNE L.G. in case of an emergency — are to be congratulated on maintaining the serviceability throughout the day. In the first patrol after lunch, just as our formation had been relieved by another Squadron, ten Me 109's flew in from the North-West. Our COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE DFC., and BAR, damaged one but interception was made difficult by accurate gunfire from the ships off ANZIO and no other claims were made.

28/01/44

We are all most anxious that the Squadron's total of enemy aircraft destroyed shall be brought to three hundred while we are over here in the NAPLES area and our pilots are so keen about it that it

seemed particularly bad luck for us today that on the two occasions when HUN aircraft were sighted they were being successfully engaged by KITTYHAWKS. There were three patrols over the ANZIO battle area and the only time our pilots fired it was at two stray balloons. Other squadrons have been much more fortunate in meeting the LUFTWAFFE and during the last week 62 have been destroyed.

29/01/44

Only 16 sorties were flown over the ANZIO battle area today and no enemy "kites" were airborne when our pilots were in the air. Do they know when 92 takes the air?

30/01/44

Early this morning 12 of our aircraft provided target cover to 36 MITCHELLS which bombed VALMONTONI and GENZANO. In bad weather later in the day we were to do the same job over GROTTA FERRATA but the bombers did not turn up.

31/01/44

Low cloud and bad haze put an end to the patrol which was laid on for dawn. Two aircraft did take off just after mid-day to carry out a weather recce over ANZIO but when they had landed we were released. Not since JULY last year have we recorded such a high total of flying times for the month; operational hours have reached 775 hours 35 minutes this month in which 540 operational sorties have been flown and 38 non-operational sorties added another 27 hours 15 minutes.

01/02/44

For two hours this morning 12 of our pilots sat at Readiness until two of them took off for a weather recce over the ANZIO battle area. After their report of 10/10ths cloud at 500 feet we did no more flying.

02/02/44

Twenty-five sorties were flown over the ANZIO area and during our last show six of our pilots encountered a "gaggle" of 15 to 20 F/W 190's flying east to the battle area. The COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, brought his personal score to 16 destroyed by chasing one of them until he saw it crash. F/O. "CURLY" HENDERSON claimed one damaged when he returned, but F/Lt. J.H. NICHHOLLS was able to confirm that it had crashed in flames so "Curly" is also credited with one destroyed. F/O. M.J. FAKHRY was hit in the combat and made a forced landing North of ANZIO, but he got back in a DC 3 in time for dinner. Three new pilots joined us, they are W/O. YOUNG, F/Sgt. CONDON and F/Sgt. NEWMAN.

03/02/44

Our two patrols over ANIZIO today, with a Section of six aircraft on each trip, were uneventful. Low cloud covered the area and the HUN obviously decided not to risk sending his aircraft over.

04/02/44

Six pilots were at Readiness for two hours from dawn. An escort to bombers was laid on but had to be cancelled owing to bad weather. We were released at mid-day.

05/02/44

Cloud lay low over base all day but over the ANZIO area it was dear and we were able to fly 20 sorties on patrol there. No enemy aircraft were encountered but F/O. M.J. FAKHRY had to force land at NETTUNO landing strip owing to engine trouble. Fortunately he was unhurt. Four NEW ZEALAND Nursing Sisters were entertained in our pilots' Mess this evening — it did us good to hear English speaking female voices again.

06/02/44

Our first job today was an escort to 36 BOSTONS which bombed a target 15 miles South of ROME without any opposition from enemy aircraft. In the afternoon 22 sorties were flown in two uneventful patrols over the ANZIO area.

07/02/44

In clear weather we carried out three patrols over the ANZIO beach-head without encountering any of the LUFTWAFFE. During the last patrol, two of a formation of MUSTANGS opened fire on our pilots but caused no damage.

08/02/44

The cloud base over ANZIO came down from 18,000 feet just after breakfast to 6,000 feet at mid-day. Twelve pilots took off early and had nothing to report apart from the weather conditions and ten more were airborne at lunch time.

09/02/44

Twenty-four sorties were flown in patrols over ANZIO without any contact with the HUN.

10/02/44

At 0930 hours we had six aircraft at Readiness and four of them were scrambled to search for a dinghy West of VENTOTENE ISLAND. A launch was seen to pick up survivors from two dinghies but we were asked to continue to search for others. We had no luck. Mid-morning eight pilots were airborne to delouse for 48 MARAUDERS bombing in the region of MARINO but they were forced to return owing to bad weather.

11/02/44

F/Lt. D.L.G. TURVEY (RCAF) has been appointed a FLIGHT COMMANDER with 417 SQUADRON — he takes with him our very best wishes but we are very sorry to have to part with him. The Squadron was at "30 minutes" today until 1600 hours. Shows were laid on twice during the day, but had to be cancelled. Snow, hail, driving rain, thunder and lightning continued throughout the day.

12/02/44

Twenty-nine sorties were flown in uneventful patrols over ANZIO. When in the circuit about to land at mid-day, F/Sgt. A.T. CONDON had engine trouble and he was forced to belly-land his aircraft just off the runway.

13/02/44

Lt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) and W/O. J.B. PAULIE (RAAF) reported for flying duties today. Six pilots patrolled ANZIO for 40 minutes early this morning and six more escorted three boxes of BOSTONS which bombed a target about 15 miles South of ROME. There was another escort to 36 BOSTONS in the afternoon by six of our aircraft to the same area and during this show F/O. "CURLY" HENDERSON was forced to land at NETTUNO with engine trouble. He made a perfect landing and arrived safely at base an hour later.

14/02/44

No enemy aircraft were encountered on the patrol by ten aircraft soon after dawn, but Lt. J. GASSON had engine trouble which forced him to land at NETTUNO and F/Lt. J. WOOLER's engine also cut on him. He baled out about one mile South of FELICE POINT but was picked up by an A.S.R. launch after being in his dinghy for over four hours. Since we have been in the NAPLES area at least nine pilots have had to make forced landings owing to their engines cutting and after two episodes today our aircraft were grounded. Samples of petrol have been analysed and the

presence of corrosive sulphur has been found. Special supplies of sealed petrol has been received and all tanks and bowisers have been flushed out. Lt. J. GASSON brought back a report from a squadron engineer at NETTUNO that it had been found that petrol was freezing in the petrol cooler on SPITFIRE VIII's causing the engine to cut. In view of this report it has been decided to blank off the airflow to the cooler and it is hoped that this will put an end to our troubles.

15/02/44

A total of 32 sorties were flown in patrols over ANZIO, but no enemy aircraft were sighted. We are pleased to report that no further engine troubles were experienced.

16/02/44

There was much dismay this morning when our eight aircraft landed from the first patrol over ANZIO. We were all eager to hear what claims would be made when we saw that the leader had fired and were disappointed to learn that none of our pilots was able to get within range of 15 F/W 190's they had sighted. In despair, S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, had fired at four of them from 350 yards but he saw no results. After that "show" the squadron was at "30 minutes" and the pilots were having lunch when a call came through from WING OPS. asking if we could get a section airborne at once. In less than 10 minutes, although several of our kites were under "daily inspections" five of our pilots had taken off. They had been on patrol for 26 minutes when vapour trails were seen orbiting ROME, increasing in number and shortly afterwards

a "gaggle" of aircraft was sighted flying down the coast. They were identified as 20 F/W 190's in a tight formation with a top cover of six Me 109's, flying 5,000 feet above. Our pilots flew to intercept and met the enemy aircraft head-on as they dived to bomb the road North of ANZIO. The HUNS, continuing to dive, turned northwards, but our pilots gave chase. F/Lt. J.F. EDWARDS, DFC., DFM., destroyed a F/W 190 and Lt. J. GASSON shot the tail off a Me 109 which crashed in flames. W/O. S.D. YOUNG damaged a Me 109. Thus was the Squadron total of enemy, aircraft destroyed brought to the 300 mark. The pilots on this operation were;- F/Lt. J.F. EDWARDS, Lt. J. GASSON, F/O. M.J. FAKHRY, W/O. S.D. YOUNG and W/O. J.B. PAULEY. There was another patrol finishing at last light but no contact was made with the LUFTWAFFE. We are sorry to lose F/O. J.M. PHILLIPS who left us today on being posted to No. 31 A.S.P. F/Lt. J. WOOLER also left us on being appointed a FLIGHT COMMANDER with No. 145 SQUADRON; he takes with him our very best wishes.

17/02/44

Thirty-two sorties were flown in patrols over ANZIO. In the first operation 15 to 20 F/W 190's were seen diving to bomb the road North of ANZIO but our aircraft were not able to make contact. In the evening a celebration was held in the Officers' and Pilots' Mess on the occasion of our pilots destroying the Squadron's 300th enemy aircraft. Both the first and second FLIGHT COMMANDERS of "A" FLIGHT were present in the persons of WING COMMANDER "PADDY" GREENE, DSO., DFC., and GROUP

CAPTAIN BRIAN KINGCOME, DSO., DFC., and BAR. Other guests were WING COMMANDER S. TURNER, DFC., and BAR, SQUADRON LEADER KALLIO, DFC., the FLIGHT COMMANDERS from 145, 417 and 601 SQUADRONS, CAPTAIN WINDHAM SMITH, CAPTAIN WREN, and F/Lt. ALLEN from 244 WING.

18/02/44

Patrols over ANZIO were continued but our 24 pilots airborne on the two operations had no contact with the HUN. S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, F/Lt. J.H. NICHOLLS DFC., and F/O. G.J. CORNISH spent a very happy evening as guests of 600 SQUADRON.

19/02/44

Six aircraft were at Readiness from dawn until 0930 hours. At 1245 hours the Squadron, with 12 aircraft, took off to provide area cover to MARAUDERS which were to bomb a target South-east of ROME. Hearing a report of bandits near ANZIO, the leader decided to wait for the bombers off the coast there and escort them to their target. The bombing operation was, however, cancelled but our pilots intercepted 20 F/W 190's and Me 109's which were covered by 12 more Me 109's. F/Lt. J.P. EDWARDS, DFC., DFM., destroyed a F/W 190 and damaged another. F/O. K.N.R. SISSONS damaged a F/W 190 and another Me 109 destroyed was shared by the Squadron. Six aircraft later gave area cover to a formation of MITCHELLS which bombed a target near LAKE ALBANO.

COMMANDING OFFICER COX

20/02/44

SQUADRON LEADER G.J. COX, DFC., arrived today, ex 72 SQUADRON, to take over command of the Squadron from S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, who has become "tour expired." Only two patrols, both of which were uneventful, were carried out over the ANZIO battle area.

21/02/44

Thirty-two sorties were flown in patrols over ANZIO without any contact with enemy aircraft. Lt. V.V. BOY (SAAF) and Sgt. G. CUNNINGHAM-LENY reported for flying duties having come from 244 WING TRAINING FLIGHT.

22/02/44

Not until 0900 hours were we required for ops. and then 10 pilots patrolled the usual area without any incident. Six pilots were at Readiness for half-an-hour after lunch before they were scrambled to patrol over CASINO. Several formations of friendly aircraft were intercepted but no hostile ones. Later, four aircraft were sent off to escort three MITCHELLS to PONTECORVO and ATINA where they dropped large bundles of leaflets.

23/02/44

AS soon as our 10 aircraft reached GAETA POINT on their way to patrol over the ANZIO battle area, they ran into a storm and were ordered to return to base. At 1100 hours the Squadron was

released and most of the pilots went into NAPLES for the afternoon performance of the opera. After the opera.....(that is another story!)

24/02/44

Twenty-one sorties were flown on patrols over the battle area North of ANZIO without contact with the HUN.

25/02/44

Soon after dawn eight pilots took off to patrol ANZIO and, to their joy, as soon as they arrived there two Me 109's were seen 1,000 feet below and only 1,000 yards away flying North-west. Lt. J.E. GASSON and Lt. M.D. LAWTON chased one to within five miles of ROME where it crashed and burned out. F/Lt. J.F. EDWARDS, DFC., DFM., had bad luck because his filter closed and he was unable to jettison his long-range tank, but he chased the other enemy aircraft to the mouth of the RIVER TIBER before it pulled away. There was an uneventful patrol with eight aircraft after lunch and then four pilots sat on Readiness for an hour and a half. S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFC., and BAR, said "farewell" to the Squadron today. Since he took over command on the 3rd NOVEMBER 1943, we have destroyed 20 enemy aircraft which, in itself, is a tribute to his leadership. We are sorry to see him go but we realise that at the end of a tour in which he has personally accounted for 16 destroyed he deserves a rest.

26/02/44

Six pilots were at Readiness from 0830 to 1100 hours but the weather closed in and we were then released for the rest of the day.

27/02/44

F/O. P.J. JONES (RAAF) reported for flying duties, ex No. 73 SQUADRON. Two patrols, each with eight aircraft, were carried out in spite of low cloud over the ANZIO area.

28/02/44

No enemy aircraft were encountered over the battle area where our pilots completed 18 sorties. Two Ju 88's were reported South of ANZIO, but, on interception they proved to be MITCHELLS! A warning of a strong Southerly wind was received in the afternoon and more adverse weather is expected.

29/02/44

From dawn until 1030 hours pilots were at Readiness. Rain continued to fall throughout the morning and low clouds covered the hills, but it was 1330 hours before we were released. This month a record number of operational hours has been flown; 509 sorties involved 831 hours 55 minutes and 48 non-operational sorties added another 34 hours 35 minutes. Our score now stands at 303½ destroyed, 105 probably destroyed and 173 damaged.

01/03/44

The whole WING was released today and trips were organised to VESUVIUS and to POMPEI in spite of very bad weather. With No. 145 SQUADRON, our Pilots' Mess arranged a dance for tonight in the CASERTA BALLROOM and much credit is due to W/O. K. WARREN, F/O. JACK IVES, F/Sgt. TED BRISTER, F/Sgt. PERCIVAL, Lt. V. BOY, F/Sgt. D. KING, F/Sgt. J. PEACOCK, Sgt. G. CUNNINGHAM-LENY for turning a bare room at the top of the ROYAL PALACE into a gaily decorated dance hall. One big feature of the decorations was the display of a dozen large and humorous drawings by W/O. KEN WARREN and these (and he) were eagerly sought after by our lady guests. Nursing Sisters were invited from No. 1 RAF., 15th CANADIAN, 104th CANADIAN, and NO. 2 NEW ZEALAND HOSPITALS and other guests included GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINGCOME, DSO., DFC., and BAR, GROUP CAPTAIN DUNCAN SMITH, DSO., DFC., and BAR, WING COMMANDER WARBURTON, DSO., and BAR, DFC., and 2 BARS, WING COMMANDER S. TURNER, DFC., and BAR, WING COMMANDER "PADDY" GREEN, DSO., DFC., & Bar, and SQUADRON COMMANDERS and FLIGHT LIEUTENANTS from the other Squadrons in 244 WING and 324 WING. It was a grand party.

02/03/44

Our aircraft were airborne at 0945 hours on patrol over the ANZIO battle area and two more patrols were flown in the afternoon without incident. Four of our pilots with four from 417 SQUADRON provided target cover to nearly 100 MARAUDERS which bombed

CISTERNA, but no enemy aircraft were encountered. For this last show each section had been told (owing to a misunderstanding with WING OPS.) that it was to be top cover to the other and the pilots were amused to find themselves still battling for height at 21,000 feet with 417 pilots before the mistake was rectified.

03/03/44

Rain fell continuously over base and there was very low cloud between us and the ANZIO area but, in spite of it, 18 sorties were flown over the battle area. No enemy aircraft were encountered. At night, the first time for many months, Sgt. J. SCROGGIE brought the piano accordion into the Pilots' Mess and we had a most enjoyable "sing-song."

04/03/44

A show was laid on for 0550 hours this morning, but it was cancelled owing to bad weather. Eight pilots eventually took off after lunch and patrolled the ANZIO battle area but no HUNS were there in spite of the news that a new GRUPPE of F/W 190's and Me 109's has arrived in CENTRAL ITALY.

05/03/44

Patrols over ANZIO were continued but owing to low cloud over the area our sorties only amounted to 14.

06/03/44

From dawn until 0800 hours four pilot's were at Readiness and then eight aircraft carried out a patrol over ANZIO after breakfast.

Another hour's Readiness was done after that show. In the afternoon six aircraft escorted three MITCHELLS which were to drop leaflets over CHIETI; they flew to TERMOLI but bad weather prevented them from approaching the target so they had to return. A signal arrive posting F/Lt. J.F. EDWARDS, DFC., DFM., to command 274 SQUADRON and consequently a party was held in the Pilots' Mess to celebrate this well-merited promotion.

07/03/44

A total of 27 sorties were flown in ANZIO patrols without sight of the LUFTWAFFE. We are pleased to report that six members of this squadron have been MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES; they are;- 365145 W/O. C.F. BROWN, B.E.M., 969070 Cpl. W. FINNIE (second time for both), 534331 A/W/O. R.W. NIXON, 568530 A/F/Sgt. J.G. CHRISTOPHER, 560626 F/Sgt. A.C. FOSTER and 1152123 Cpl. R.P. BITHRAY. W/O. K. WARREN and F/Sgt. F.E. BRISTER received instructions to report to the GROUP COMMANDANT, FORWARD H.Q., DESERT AIR FORCE, regarding their forthcoming interview with the A.O.C. on the subject of their applications for a commission.

08/03/44

Eight pilots were off at dawn to patrol the battle area and three more formations were airborne during the day on the same job. On the mid-day show when S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC., was leading eight of our aircraft, F/O. K.N.R. SISSONS led a formation consisting of four of 92 and four of 145 SQUADRON in which S/Ldr. N.F. DUKE, DSO., DFC., and BAR was flying. (S/Ldr. DUKE was recently

appointed to command 145 SQUADRON; he was a FLIGHT COMMANDER with us last year when he brought his total of enemy aircraft destroyed to 22).

09/03/44

From half-past six we had 12 aircraft at 60 Minutes in anticipation of a long-range bomber escort. They were brought to 30 Minutes at 0915 and later four pilots were at Readiness for an hour and a half. It was late afternoon before the squadron was airborne and then they escorted 12 BOSTONS to a target 15 miles East of ROME without opposition. To welcome their new COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. N.F. DUKE, DSO., DFC., and BAR, 145 SQUADRON held a grand party tonight to which S/Ldr. G.J. COX. DFC., F/Lt. J.H.NICHOLLS, DFC., F/O. K.N.R.SISSONS, F/O. R.W. HENDERSON, F/Lt. G.L. TRAVIS and F/O. G.J. CORNISH were invited. F/Lt. J.F. EDWARDS, DFC., DFM., left us today on being posted to command 274 SQUADRON. With us as FLIGHT COMMANDER of "A" FLIGHT, he proved himself an exceptionally capable leader and his pilots derived great benefit from his experienced flying. We shall miss him but are pleased that well-earned promotion has been given him.

10/03/44

With 31 sorties flown over the ANZIO battle area, this was a busier day but no enemy aircraft were encountered.

11/03/44

Patrols were continued over the battle area and we had 28 aircraft airborne between dawn and last light without sighting the LUFTWAFFE.

12/03/44

This was our day for bomber-escort shows but the operations laid on for 1000 hours was cancelled owing to adverse weather conditions. Four aircraft were at Readiness at mid-day for an hour and a half.

13/04/44

We were very pleased to hear of the promotion of F/Lt. J.H.NICHOLLS, DFC. to command 601 SQUADRON. He will be especially delighted because he served his first tour of operations with that Squadron in the desert, but we shall miss him here as much for his cheerful disposition as for his brilliant leadership. F/O. K.N.R. SISSONS has been promoted to FLIGHT LIEUTENANT to command "A" FLIGHT and F/Lt. B.L. GARNER assumes command of "B" FLIGHT. Ten aircraft were on patrol during the day over the ANZIO area in perfect weather. A party was held in the Pilots' Mess to celebrate the promotion of S/LDR. J.H.NICHOLLS, DFC., and F/Lt. K.N.R. SISSONS.

14/03/44

At dawn, eight pilots took off for a patrol but heavy rain and 10/10ths cloud at 300 feet forced them to return. A formation of 12 aircraft patrolled this afternoon over ANZIO without any incident.

15/03/44

Four aircraft were at Readiness for three hours from dawn and for one hour in the late afternoon. The only show was a patrol of 12 aircraft between CEPRANO and ARCE protecting large forces of heavy bombers which pounded CASSINO prior to an attack in that area by NEW ZEALAND and INDIAN TROOPS.

16/03/44

The weather was perfectly clear when 12 of our pilots patrolled the ANZIO battle area this morning but no hostile aircraft were seen.

17/03/44

Twenty-one sorties were flown uneventfully over the ANZIO beachhead. When are we going to meet the HUN again?

18/03/44

At dawn eight pilots took off to patrol CASSINO and then from 0920 to mid-day eight aircraft were at Readiness. In the afternoon 12 pilots provided close escort to 24 BOSTONS which bombed near VALMONTONE without any opposition. The volcano of VESUVIUS, ten miles to the South of us, erupted tonight and we watched thousands of tons of lava pouring down the sides of the mountain. It was stirring to see the red-hot mass move down slowly from the mouth of the crater. This is said to be the biggest display since 1929, the main stream which is a quarter-of-a-mile wide and seven feet high is moving south to the east of TORRE DEL GRECO, which was destroyed in 1794. F/Lt. L. TENORDEN (RAAF) and F/O. L. MONTGOMERIE (RNZAF) reported for flying duties.

19/03/44

With 32 sorties this was a busier day for us. In formations of eight aircraft, our pilots carried out two patrols over the ANZIO battle area and two over CASSINO. The HUN has been busier, too, but was not airborne when we were. Blast him!

20/03/44

Our first patrol, at squadron strength, was over ANZIO, then at mid-day our aircraft covered CASSINO. Another formation patrolled the ANZIO area late in the afternoon without incident.

21/03/44

There was no flying today owing to adverse weather conditions. A bomber escort operation was laid on in the afternoon but had to be cancelled.

22/03/44

Four aircraft only were sent up before breakfast to patrol the ANZIO battle area but with an improvement in the weather our two other patrols were increased to squadron strength. The first of these was over CASSINO and as our pilots were on their way out 50 bandits were reported in the area. Unfortunately, they had made off by the time our squadron arrived there but they had been successfully dealt with by other SPITFIRES. The highlight of the dusk patrol over ANZIO was the superb landing by Sgt. G. CUNNINGHAM-LENY whose engine cut, owing to lack of petrol, while he was in the circuit. With 145 SQUADRON we held a dance at the CASSERTA BALLROOM this evening to which Nursing

Sisters from the 14th CANADIAN, No. 1 RAF. and 2nd NEW ZEALAND HOSPITALS were invited. It was a most successful party. F/O. J. IVES, W/O. K. WARREN and F/Sgt. F. NEWMAN were responsible for the decorations which were even better than those provided for the last dance. Transport was provided to allow our airmen to visit VESUVIUS which is still erupting.

23/03/44

Our early morning show was cancelled owing to 10/10ths cloud which was lying low over the battle area, but by mid-day it had cleared considerably and 12 pilots carried out a patrol over ANZIO. Eight aircraft climbed through 15,000 feet of cloud to cover CASSINO late in the afternoon but returned owing to bad weather there.

24/03/44

Six pilots were at Readiness from dawn until 0800 hours and when they returned for breakfast they were amazed to find that the Pilots' Mess had been burned down. Fortunately, all the furniture had been saved but several flying log books were badly charred. An immediate Court of Inquiry is being held to ascertain the cause. Twenty-four sorties were flown on patrols over ANZIO and on both operations enemy aircraft were engaged by other squadrons in the Wing over CASSINO. We congratulate 145 SQUADRON on destroying five today and bringing their total to 200 destroyed.

25/03/44

There was 12,000 feet of cloud over CASSINO when our aircraft at squadron strength patrolled the area early this morning but conditions improved slightly during the day. There were two more operations, the first over ANZIO and the other over CASSINO but no hostile aircraft were reported. It is a great disappointment to our pilots that the LUFTWAFFE is never airborne at the same time as the Squadron but our day will come. A football match was played this morning in the CASERTA STADIUM against 145 SQUADRON, who beat us by two goals to nil, and put us out of the ITALY CUP COMPETITION.

26/03/44

A very strong wind was blowing across the runway when 12 of our aircraft took off to patrol ANZIO this morning, and there were no further shows for us.

27/03/44

Thirty-six uneventful sorties were flown, including 12, led by WING COMMANDER S. TURNER, DFC., and BAR, over CASSINO, where the HUN has been operating recently. Lt. B. MANNE (SAAF) and Lt. W.F. STEENKAMP (SAAF) reported for flying duties.

28/03/44

Two shows over ANZIO and one over CASSINO brought us no better luck. Bandits were reported when our pilots were over CASSINO and the leader, F/Lt. B. GARNER sighted eight F/W 190's

diving from 26,000 feet over ARPINO but no contact was possible. Our aircraft landed at NETTUNO after the last operation.

29/03/44

Taking off at dawn from NETTUNO, our pilots were told of bandits over CISTERNA. F/O. L. MONTGOMERIE saw something glittering and was told to lead the Squadron towards what proved to be a star! However, in the same direction he later spotted two Me 109's about four miles away and gave chase. The HUN must have spotted our aircraft because he sought refuge in cloud. There was more excitement when we were told to force down a LIGHTNING which was flying north over ANZIO at 30,000 feet. Lt. J. GASSON flew alongside it and saw AMERICAN markings which he reported to the CONTROLLER, but "Y" SERVICE reported that a HUN message had been intercepted to the effect that the aircraft was being pursued by SPITFIRES. We would like to hear more about this. Six aircraft were scrambled from Standby for an interception over CASSINO but, when they arrived over the area, were told to pancake. Twenty-four more sorties were flown over ANZIO after lunch.

30/03/44

This was another uneventful day of patrols over the ANZIO battle area. Low cloud covered base and the patrol area.

01/04/44

A patrol of 12 aircraft over the ANZIO battle area in the morning was quite uneventful and soon after landing the squadron was

released for the remainder of the day. F/Lt. J.E.L. Smith reported for flying duties.

02/04/44

The squadron was at 30 Minutes Availability from 0715 hrs until 1005 when led by W/Commander S TURNER, DFC., and BAR 11 aircraft took off to provide close escort for 12 BOSTONS which were bombing a tented camp near MORICONE. A billowing cloud of smoke and flame some 300 feet high followed the attack but there was no Hun opposition either from the ground or from the air. No more operational flying took place but we did two one hour periods of Stand-by readiness in the afternoon. We say good bye today to F/O. G.J. Cornish now posted to 274 Squadron and wish him all possible success and happiness at his new unit. F/O. CORNISH came out from England with the Squadron which he originally joined at Digby in January, 1942. The success and welfare of the Squadron have always been his foremost consideration. He has won a Mention in Despatches and the sincere gratitude of every officer and airman with whom he has come in contact during his long and arduous tour of duty. His successor is F/O. A.R. EVANS who has come to us from 274 Squadron.

03/04/44

Three patrols over ANZIO — two in the morning without incident — one at last light when we landed at NETTUNO and spent the night there. On the last patrol, as we approached ANZIO bandits were reported flying South East down the coast at 14,000 feet., but they disappeared towards ROME before we were able to make

contact. F/O. R.W. HENDERSON asked to report on “QUEENIES” after a brief attempt to be helpful and not quite knowing what to do — soon got out of his depth and gave it while Sgt. D. KING stopped some heavy flak in his starboard mainplane and port tail plane. Though there was some activity overhead during the night and the A.A. gunners were working overtime we were quite relieved not to be bombed and shelled as had happened the previous night. Certain other members of the Squadron who were not flying spent an enjoyable evening as guests at a dance held by 417 and 601 Squadrons in the PALACE BALLROOM, CASERTA.

04/04/44

As some compensation for spending the night at NETTUNO we carried out the first light patrols over ANZIO but the Hun was not forthcoming . Two more patrols over the same area later in the day were quite uneventful apart from the shooting down of a drifting Balloon over NETTUNO — in the course of which the Squadron added two Yanks damaged (by shell cases) to its score.

05/04/44

We were at 60 Minutes all the morning and apart from a couple of uneventful patrols over the ANZIO area where there was low cloud most of the day nothing of interest happened. In the evening a Squadron dinner for the N.C.O's and airmen was held at the MALCOLM CLUB, NAPLES to celebrate the 300th victory and a most enjoyable and convivial time was had by all.

06/04/44

Rather a disappointing day — we had been keyed up with the prospect of a show-down with the Hun on a Wing escort to 72 MITCHELLS which were bombing PERUGIA marshalling yards. A weather recce carried out in the morning by F/Lt. K.N.R. SISSONS and F/O. W.R. HENDERSON brought back the news that the weather over the target area was quite good so at 1525 hours led by W/Cmdr. S. TURNER DFC and BAR we took off, followed closely by 417, 145 and 601 Squadrons. However after reaching the AVEZZANO area the bombers unaccountably turned back and the mission was abandoned.

07/04/44

Squadron released at 1030 hours. Some of us went off to NAPLES — a few to see the new IRVING BERLIN show “This is the Army” the others to maintain the ‘social front’, while a large number of enthusiasts watched our soccer team play 601 Squadron who defeated us by 4 goals to nil in a keenly contested game.

08/04/44

Six aircraft did Stand-by Readiness in the early morning and it was not until 0955 hours that 8 of our aircraft took off to escort 2 Spitfires of 40 SWA.AF. who were doing a photo recce of the RIVER TIBER North of ROME. But both this and a close escort job a little later in the morning by 4 more of our aircraft to 20 BOSTONS that were bombing a target near MORICONE were quite uneventful, while a patrol over the ANZIO area in the

afternoon had nothing to report. S/Ldr. E.D. MACKIE, DFM. C and BAR looking remarkably fit came to wish us goodbye before going to U.K. and was entertained to lunch.

09/04/44

Only one show today, an uneventful patrol over ANZIO in the early morning. A trip fixed for later on in the day had to be cancelled because of rain and low cloud, and we were released at 1430 hours. Five of our pilots — F/Lt. K.N.R. SISSONS, F/O. W.R. HENDERSON, F/O. J. IVES, F/Sgt. M.J. PERCIVAL, and F/Sgt. P. SAVILL are now tour expired and we have only 18 operational pilots left.

10/04/44

An escort job in the morning to 24 MITCHELLS which were bombing a railway bridge a few miles North West of ORTE failed to bring up enemy fighters and after 3 hours Stand-by Readiness from 1300 to 1600 hours we were glad to take off even on an ANZIO patrol. A party was held in the evening at 244 WING to which the C.O., FLIGHT COMMANDERS and TECHNICAL OFFICERS were invited.

11/04/44

Another blank day — the Hun doesn't show himself and isn't likely to for the next 10 days so we understand — still it is giving some of the less experienced pilots a chance to get practice in leading formations of the eight aircraft that took off on an ANZIO patrol at 1530 hrs, four were recalled almost immediately because of bad

weather, and when the other four returned at 1640 hours a thunderstorm was in progress so F/O. L. MONTGOMERIE (N.Z.) decided to land at LAGO where after a substantial meal they returned to base.

12/04/44

Twenty-four sorties over ANZIO today — all equally uneventful — apart, from a disposition on the part of A.A. gunners to use our aircraft as target practice. Pilots doing close escort to 24 BOSTONS that were bombing ammunition dumps near ZAGAROLO were rewarded with the spectacular sight of an explosion in which flames rose to well over a thousand feet.

13/04/44

After a couple of what can now almost be classed as 'stooge' patrols over ANZIO, our flying activities ceased, but in the afternoon Lt. J. GASSON (SAAF) was promoted to CAPTAIN and hardly had we finished congratulating him when we learnt with delight that F/O. W.R. "CURLY" HENDERSON had been awarded the DFC. If ever an award was deserved, it was this, for "CURLY" has completed two tours of OPS; the first in the Desert on HURRICANES, the second in NORTH AFRICA, SICILY and ITALY on SPITFIRES and on each tour he proved himself outstanding as a pilot and as a leader of men. A party was held in the Mess in the evening to celebrate. Three new pilots — F/Lt. D. WRIGHT, F/Sgt. A. PHILLIMORE and F/Sgt. J. LANE — all from 244 TRAINING FLIGHT, arrived today. This afternoon the C.O. and S/Ldr. N. DUKE DSO, DFC and BAR, flew to MALTA on 'important' business.

14/04/44

Our luck changed at long last. A couple of 109's were seen creeping in behind our YELLOW SECTION which was escorting 36 MITCHELLS who had gone out to bomb the L.G. at VITERBO. F/Lt. B. GARNER did a head-on attack on both, chasing one of them down, while the other turning to port in a climbing turn, was picked on by F/O. L. MONTGOMERIE (N.Z.) who closed to 100 yards and shot it down in flames. Good show, MONTY. Today CAPTAIN J. GASSON (SAAF) took over command of "A" FLIGHT.

15/04/44

A bomber escort show laid on for the morning had to be cancelled because of weather conditions and during a beachhead patrol in the afternoon the pilots spent most of their time patrolling a dinghy 15 miles N.W. of the TIBER MOUTH (which after a long time was discovered to be empty — bit of finger trouble here.) and covering a launch that had been sent out to the rescue. In the evening the C.O. returned from MALTA after a most successful trip bringing with him plenty of beer and gin and at the ensuing party it was generally agreed that the liquor was good and the journey well worth the while.

16/04/44

After three hours Stand-by Readiness from 0800 to 1100 hours, twelve of our aircraft took off in high hopes on an escort to 24 BOSTONS that were bombing a tented camp near NEROLA. The trip however was quite uneventful as was an ANZIO patrol in the

evening. F/O. W.R. FAIR (RCAF) and W/O. R.H. SABEL (USA — RFAC) reported for flying duties today. The squadron football team lost 4 — 0 to 3067 A.M.E.S in a match played on 601 Squadron's ground.

17/04/44

A patrol over ANZIO in the morning by 8 aircraft and one in the afternoon by 4 aircraft were both without incident and we were released early. A dance — the last we fear for some time to come — was held at the CASERTA BALLROOM in the evening in conjunction with 145 Squadron and a most enjoyable time was had by all. Once again F/O. J. IVES and F/Sgt. F. NEWMAN were responsible for decorating the hall and they did so most successfully.

18/04/44

An escort Job to 24 MITCHELLS who were going out to bomb a railway bridge near ORVIETO was abandoned 40 minutes after take off as the bombers were freed to turn back near AVEZZANO when they ran into 10/10ths cloud rising from the mountains tops to 22000 ft., while an ANZIO patrol in the afternoon by 8 aircraft brought back the usual "nothing to report". Today we learnt that the WING is moving to VENAFRO so it was a rather harassed Adjutant that went to bed that night.

19/04/44

"A" party led by the Adjutant, and F/O. J. LUNN set out at 0800 hours this morning for VENAFRO — the Adjutant returning fairly

satisfied — about 1300 hours with the news that they had settled in the North Eastern part of the dispersal area and that the main camp would be some 800 to 1,000 yards away from the 'drome. Later in the afternoon we learnt that “B” party would not move on the morrow as had previously been arranged. Meanwhile at 1215 hours, twelve of our aircraft, led by the C.O., and Capt. J.GASSON and F/Lt. B. GARNER, took off to do a period of 24 hour Stand-by readiness over at NETTUNO. Nothing occurred until 1850 hrs when 8 aircraft were scrambled to intercept a couple of F/W 190 recce kites that were flying down the coast from the TIBER. F/O. P.JONES (AUS) was the first, to spot them, and Red Section led by Capt. J. GASSON at once gave chase, closing to 300 yards North East of CISTERNA. Most of the combat was fought out at deck level, one F/W 190 taking a tremendous amount of punishment from JOHNNY and PAUL before the pilot decided to bale out at 400 feet, (his parachute opened too at 50 ft.) while F/Sgt. D. KING chased another into the mountains damaging it before it finally disappeared — probably into a hillside — for “Y” service had no report of it making base. Today we said good bye to F/Lt. K.N.R. SISSONS, F/O. W.R. HENDERSON, DFC, F/Sgt. P. SAVILL and F/Sgt. M.J. PERCIVAL — all of whom are tour expired and we wish them every success in the future.

20/04/44

Our aircraft returned at 1320 hours today bringing with them the welcome news that on the previous day 1 F/W 190 had been destroyed and one damaged. A scramble this morning before they

left NETTUNO had led to the interception of a P.38 which as usual was not showing I.F.F. Apart from this and a dawn patrol there had been no operational flying. A little desultory shelling had occurred during the night but on the whole it was quiet enough, while some of the monotony of Stand-by Readiness had been broken by the gyrations of an American who nearly broke his neck while trying to show off on a motor bike. For the remainder of the day we were released and most pilots had diversion ready in one form or another.

21/04/44

After our aircraft had been at 2 hours availability all morning by the grace of God — or should we say, without reverence, F/O. ABRAHAMS — the Squadron was released. Quite a peace-time atmosphere seems to be creeping in these days. Somehow I feel it wont last long.

22/04/44

A projected sweep by 12 aircraft over VITERBO - ORTE - BRACIANO while MUSTANGS bombed and strafed road and rail communications round ORVIETO was indefinitely postponed and finally cancelled owing to unfavourable weather, and we were released.

VENAFRO

23/04/44

Squadron moved to VENAFRO L.G. The road party arriving about mid-day, while 10 of our aircraft flew over from MARCIANISE at 0930 hours, landing here at 0945, to be joined at 1020 by the other six that had provided top cover to 24 BOSTONS that had bombed a camp near VALMONTONE. From 1200 to 1300 hours 6 aircraft did Stand-by Readiness and then at 1645, 12 aircraft led by Capt. J. GASSON, took off to do an independent fighter sweep over VITERBO — ORTE — BRACIANO. Half an hour later Capt. GASSON and F/Lt. GARNER had landed with news that just South East of AVEZZANO they had run into 12 F/W 190's with 3 Me 190's as top cover. Our pilots "had got stuck in" immediately and in the ensuing stern chase Capt. GASSON had shot down 1 F/W 190 while F/Lt. GARNER had disposed of a Me 109. Twenty five minutes later F/O. L. MONTGOMERIE landed having added another Me 109 to the score and shortly after, Lt. E. MANNE (SAAF) came in to tell us how he had damaged an Me 109. Total bag;- 3 E/A destroyed, 1 E/A damaged. We certainly got off on a flying start. May we keep it up.

24/04/44

By lunch time today "domestic arrangement" up at the camp site had been fully organised and the Officers Mess and Sergeants Mess were fully operational. An escort by 12 of our aircraft in the early afternoon to some BOSTONS that were again bombing tents

and supplies near VALMONTONE was quite uneventful as was a first light standing patrol over the 'drome. A patrol of 4 aircraft led by F/Lt. B. GARNER along the GARIGLIANO RIVER at dusk however was successful in keeping enemy recce kites away, and our formation heartily congratulated by 64th. FIGHTER WING for its work. "Stag parties" now being the order of the day in the Mess, diversion this evening was found in watching the barrage of "dingle berries" over NAPLES and roundly cursing the Array on Night Manoeuvres for lighting flares all round the 'drome when enemy aircraft were passing overhead.

25/04/44

After being at 60 minutes all the morning, the Squadron was released and pilots found plenty of diversions ready to hand; some seeking a suitable spot in the river for bathing, others deepening their "slitters" others just basking in the sun. In the evening at dinner the Adjutant (who had spent the day climbing over mountains with the Doc.) dramatised his day's activities with stories of booby traps, rusty trip wires and dead Heinies, and ended up with a little homily on the necessity for the strict observation of anti-malarial precautions.

26/04/44, 27/04/44 and 28/04/44

A heavy downpour of rain for some twelve hours or so made the 'drome U/S and no flying was possible until the 29th.

29/04/44

After 4 days inactivity we were relieved to find that the runway had dried sufficiently to make flying possible. Our first job was to provide 12 aircraft as close cover to 24 BOSTONS that were bombing tents and supplies about 6 miles N.W. of MORICONE. The bombing must have cheered the hearts of many of our men for the target was only about ½ mile South West of a big P.O.W. cage and they had a ring side seat of the whole proceeding. Two patrols of 8 aircraft over the beach head — one in the afternoon, one at last light — after which our aircraft landed and spent the night at NETTUNO — were both uneventful. Everything by the way is pretty well organised now at ANZIO — the pilots sleep on stretchers in deep dug outs on the 'drome. Today F/Lt. L. SMITH was nominated to go up to ANZIO tomorrow to take charge of the airfield there for the next fortnight and by the same boat we are also sending 8 airmen to help with the servicing.

30/04/44

Our aircraft did not re-appear from NETTUNO until 0930 hours in the morning when we learnt that they had not been relieved on the dawn patrol by 324 WING but had stayed on, landing back at the strip and done Stand-by readiness from there until 'RALLY' aircraft had appeared. Unfortunately Lt. E. MANNE (SAAF) had run out of petrol and had crashed on landing, and though luckily he escaped injury, his aircraft was a "write-off". From 1245 to 2000 hours we had six aircraft at Stand-by and six on 30 Minutes and on two occasions we were scrambled — on the first, with F/O. L.

MONTGOMERIE (NZ) leading, a couple of bandits were chased North from GAETA up the valley towards FROSINONE but before the range could be closed they disappeared in cloud and were lost — on the second nothing of interest occurred. This month 6 enemy aircraft — 3 Me 109's and 2 F/W 190's — have been destroyed, and two damaged bringing the Squadron total score to 309 ½ destroyed, 105 Probables, 175 damaged, and a total of 631 operational hours (417 sorties) and 70 non-operational hours (108 sorties) has been flown.

01/05/44

A patrol of eight aircraft over the beachhead from 0900 to 1040 was uneventful apart from the interception of a P.38 "Brassneck aircraft" who panicked a bit when he saw our aircraft coming up to him. Was followed by a period of Stand-by readiness from 1245 to 2000 hours by six aircraft. These were scrambled at 1840 to intercept three bandits 10 miles East of FROSINONE at 20,000 ft. Nothing however was seen though we experienced a few bursts of heavy flak which exploded in mauve smoke puffs instead of the usual black.

02/05/44

At first light eleven aircraft (F/Sgt. NEWMAN'S air pressure system went "for a burton" so he failed to get off) took off for NETTUNO where they maintained a standing patrol of two aircraft over the beachhead and six aircraft at Stand-by until 1230 when they were relieved by No. 93 SQUADRON, 324 WING. Bandits were reported at various times but in every case, they headed away

North before we could make contact. After they had returned we were released for the rest of the day and in the afternoon the Squadron football team defeated R.E.V.E. by four goals to nil.

03/05/44

A long range sweep in the morning over the CASSINO landing grounds which was looked forward to with lively anticipation as we had heard that three new fighter squadrons had moved down into CENTRAL ITALY, failed to bring up the enemy and once again during the afternoon and evening we had six aircraft on Stand-by. These were scrambled at 1535 to intercept 12 enemy aircraft flying South East from FROSINONE, but aircraft of two other Squadrons who were in the area on different missions, wanted to share in the fun — with the inevitable result that the plot was lost. The usual "anti-strafig" standing patrol by two aircraft flying below mountain top height over the 'drome at last light was carried out without incident. Immediately after our release we went up to the Airmen's Mess where a show of 244 WING combat films had been arranged. Though the films — both strafing and combat were excellent, it was a little unfortunate that few "92" films were available for we had hoped that we should see some of those taken by the pilots in preceding months. However we hope that this will be remedied at the next show! On our return to the Mess we found a great gathering of "BUSHY MEN" from 145 and 601 SQUADRONS and as might be imagined the liquor flowed freely tonight!

04/05/44

A close escort to 24 BALTIMORES who were supposed to be bombing ORTE had rather surprising results, for a regular "Cook's Tour Of Italy" ensued in the course of which bombs were dropped at PRABOLA — between SULMONA and POPOLI — and on a rail-bridge between POPOLI and PESCARA; and the C.O. found himself way over the GRAN SASSO while CAPTAIN "JOHNNY" GASSON was over MARELLA. At 1200 hours we were released for the day and in the afternoon some of us went off on an excursion in search of a lake in the mountains — a trip which though unsuccessful was thoroughly enjoyable.

05/05/44

A long period of Stand-by from first light to 1330 brought no joy, but in the afternoon eight aircraft escorted 24 BALTIMORES to ORTE. Enemy aircraft were prowling around the area, and first 12 and later 14 Me 109's were sighted by F/O. L.J MONTGOMERIE. They showed no more than a casual interest in proceedings, remaining well out of range and making no effort to attack, though F/Sgt. NEWMAN believed he was fires on ineffectively from approximately 1,000 yards range.

06/05/44

No operational flying, apart from a last light standing patrol over the 'drome, though we had six aircraft on readiness all afternoon and evening.

07/05/44

Twelve aircraft went over to ANZIO at mid-day where they maintained the usual standing patrol of to aircraft. It was a completely barren day from the operational point of view. The eight ground crew members of the Squadron who were up there are apparently thoroughly enjoying themselves and have no wish to return.

08/05/44

Our aircraft returned shortly after 1300 hours after an uneventful morning of patrols over the beachhead. Bandits were reported at 0630 and again near mid-day but no sightings were made. We were released for the afternoon and in the evening some 92 Squadron combat films were shown in the Airmen's Mess to a highly critical audience. It was an enjoyable and interesting show even though there were few really good pictures apart from those taken by Capt. GASSON on 23rd APRIL 1944, when he destroyed a F/W 190 and we could see the pilot baling out. A football match against the ITALIAN MARINES who are stationed up in this sector was keenly contested but we managed to win by three goals to two. In the early hours of the morning we had an unwelcome visit from a lone raider (whether single or twin-engine is hotly debated!) who bombed and strafed some ARMY UNITS about 300 yards behind our camp and it was not until some minutes after he had left that the Air Raid Warning Red was given! Altogether too close to be pleasant.

09/05/44

We had six aircraft on standby from 1245 to last light but they were not scrambled and a couple of ANZIO patrols were both without incident.

10/05/44

Twelve uneventful sorties over ANZIO in the morning were followed by eight hours Readiness and a last light patrol.

11/05/44

From the flying point of view a completely uneventful day with 14 sorties over the beachhead and an area sweep cover by 12 aircraft over CEPRANO . In the evening all pilots and officers went over to a meeting at 417 SQUADRON MESS where we were given the outlines of the campaign which was to open at 2300 hours with a barrage from 2,000 guns (nearly four times as many as were massed at EL ALAMEIN and which aimed at linking up with our forces at ANZIO, capturing ROME and driving the enemy back to the PISA - RIMINI line. Our role, for the time being at any rate, will be strictly confined to the normal activities of a high-altitude pursuit squadron, but as we are told that the enemy has withdrawn all but 40 Me 109's and 15 Ju 87's to NORTHERN ITALY it doesn't appear as if we shall be very busy. , The barrage opened at 2300 and the line of hills around the landing ground was lit up with vivid flashes but the noise was muted and the whole thing wasn't quite as impressive as we had expected it would be.

12/05/44

This morning, led by GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINGCOME, DSO, DFC, and BAR, the Squadron swept the CASSINO battle-area while MITCHELLS bombed selected targets, but no enemy opposition was forthcoming. Eight aircraft, in sections of two, flew uneventful patrols over the beachhead in the afternoon and evening. So far the enemy has been conspicuous by his absence, but on land he is fighting tenaciously though by the end of the day the RAPIDO had been bridged and five squadrons of tanks had crossed. The POLES after some initial success on PHANTOM RIDGE are back where they started, but on the whole the situation is developing satisfactorily.

13/05/44

After a period of Stand-by readiness in the morning in the course of which six aircraft were scrambled on an interception which proved friendly, twelve aircraft led by S/Ldr. COX, DFC, F/O. L.J. MONTGOMERIE and F/O. P. JONES took off at 1240 hours to provide area cover for 24 BALTIMORES that were bombing targets near PICO and PONTECORVO. About 1330 hours as they were patrolling at 16,000 feet, North-West to South-East along the LIRI VALLEY near FROSINONE, they saw 22 aircraft on the left flying South-East towards TERRACINA. These were flying in perfect AMERICAN formation and were not thought to be hostile (22 aircraft — “Oh maleesh” was heard over the air). However turning about we watched them cross the coast, turn inland round GAETA and bomb our troops on the lower GARIGLIANO. Realising now

that they were F/W 190's we engaged them as they streaked for ROME. S/Ldr. G.J. COX damaged one and destroyed another which crashed in flames, while F/O. P. JONES shot down another (his last operational flight too), the pilot baling out, and a third (the 400th for 244 WING) was shared between Lt. V.V. BOY, W/O. C.D. YOUNG and F/Sgt. A.H. PHILLIMORE. F/O. F/O. L.J. MONTGOMERIE who was top cover joined in the fray later, and after dicing in and out of the cloud he damaged a F/W 190 before it finally disappeared. Altogether a magnificent show. In the evening 12 more of our aircraft went out on an area cover sweep to B.25's that were bombing ITRI and PICO — but the HUN did not appear again. However later on we learned that 145 SQUADRON, led by SQUADRON LEADER N.F. DUKE, DSO, DFC and BAR, had run into him near ARCE and had destroyed three and damaged three more. So much for he report that the HUN had withdrawn from CENTRAL ITALY!

14/05/44

A heavy flying day but no joy. An uneventful sweep of PONTECORVO while BALTIMORES bombed selected targets was followed by a total of 30 sorties in defence of bridges that we have established across the RAPIDO below CASSINO. On the last patrol, which was led by WING COMMANDER S. TURNER, DFC and BAR, very considerable enemy movement was seen on the secondary roads running parallel with HIGHWAY 6, and later we learned that as a result of our reports, BOSTONS had gone out and got 12 flamers in the area. It appears now that the HUN is using

PIACENZA in NORTH ITALY as his base for fighter-bombers and that they are coming down to refuel and bomb up at VITERBO before setting out on their missions.

15/05/44

This morning we carried out the dawn patrol over the 'drome and in addition sent off 4 aircraft on a weather recce and Tac/R of the FROSINONE - AVEZZANO - TIVOLI - VALMONTONE area. Both these missions however were uneventful as were 20 sorties in the course of the day over the RAPIDO bridges. Later in the evening however 8 of our aircraft, led by the C.O. S/Ldr. G. J. COX, DFC, Capt. J. GASSON (SAAF), F/Lt. B. GARNER and F/O. L.

MONTGOMERIE (N.Z.) — which were carrying out a sweep of the network of roads SOUTH of ROME, landing at NETTUNO and staying there for the night, — ran into a couple of Me 109's flying SOUTH EAST between ARSOLI and HIGHWAY 6. As soon as they saw us they half rolled in an aileron turn and dived for the deck making off towards the North, hotly pursued by F/O. L.

MONTGOMERIE, who shot one of them down, and Capt. J. GASSON who damaged the other before losing it in cloud on the mountain tops. F/O. L. MONTGOMERIE thus has 3 destroyed and 2 damaged to his credit since he changed our luck on APRIL 14th.

16/05/44

Our aircraft returned early in the morning after carrying out an uneventful sweep of the CAVINO - VITERBO area, and there was no further flying till 1200 hours, to fly to NETTUNO where they maintained constant patrols of 2 aircraft over the ANZIO battle

area until 2030 hours at night. Back here, those who were left enjoyed a bathe in the river and in the evening there was a farewell party to F/O. M. PAKHRY (AUS) and F/O. P. JONES (AUS), both of whom are tour expired. 'MARC' produced a bottle of JOHN HAIG and the party went with a swing, the Adjutant holding forth at considerable length in the later hours as whiskey followed by MUSCATA had its effect.

17/05/44

By the time our aircraft had returned from NETTUNO in the early afternoon some fifteen uneventful sorties had been flown over the beachhead. After lunch the B.B.C. recording with DENIS JOHNSON, B.B.C. reporter, came down to OPS where the C.O. S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC as representative of the Squadron which had shot down the 400th Enemy Aircraft for 244 WING, and which moreover with 312½ Enemy Aircraft destroyed is also the top scoring Squadron in the WING, recorded a message giving account of that famous action! Line!! An uneventful sweep by 12 aircraft in the FROSINONE area while bombing completed the days operations. The P.R.O. types who have been trailing round here for the past few days have, it appears, had their arduous task made lighter by the willing co-operation of the pilots whose photos in various "line shooting" attitudes (still who would blame them) littered the Mess at lunch today. In fact almost everyone on the Squadron, apart from the Adjutant whose hints had fallen on deaf ears, figured somewhere on the prints. We are very sorry today to say goodbye to F/O. M. FAKHRY (AUS) and F/O. P. JONES,

Australians both of them, they were thoroughly good fellows, "MARCE" FAKHRY in particular who had been with the Squadron for a year, will be sadly missed for he was a most cheerful and likeable fellow.

18/05/44

This morning we ran into 16 F/W 190's as we were providing top cover to 24 BOSTONS bombing some ammunition dumps near CIVITA CASTELLANA. They were first reported by Lt. V. BOY (SAAF) who saw them climbing up behind us at 13,000 feet — some 1,000 feet below and this time they really stayed to fight! An exciting dice took place at about 16,000 feet in which the enemy finding themselves out-turned dived away, but not before 4 of them had been damaged, 3 by Capt. GASSON and a 4th by Lt. V. BOY. In the ensuing chase Lt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) destroyed one E/A, the pilot baling out at 600 feet. F/Lt. D. WRIGHT shot down the undercarriage of another before breaking off, while the gallant JOHNNY GASSON chasing another NORTH EAST flew at nought feet across VITERBO A/D where there were 8 190's with wheels and flaps down in the circuit. A F/W 190 which was levelling off to land, some 20 feet off the deck, spun in as Johnny passed below him in his 'mad' pursuit and before breaking off Johnny had another damaged to his credit. In all he damaged 5 F/W 190's, and then without a reflector sight for the electrics on his kite had 'gone for a burton' and as he was turning for home when he saw the 109's orbiting ahead of him. But of course he had to muscle in! A further 22 sorties were carried out during the rest of the day, 6 on

an escort to 4 B.25's on a nickelling expedition over CHIETI, 6 as top cover to 24 BOSTONS bombing targets near the MOUTH of the TIBER, 8 on a CASSINO battle area patrol and 2 on a last light airdrome patrol, all uneventful. Today MONASTERY HILL fell to the POLES while BRITISH TROOPS mopped up CASSINO, thus our chief stumbling block for the past 6 or 8 months has at last been removed. Meanwhile the FRENCH and AMERICANS continue their spectacular advance in the sector south of the RIVER LIRI. We wonder how many ears, not to mention other things, the GOUMS have collected since the campaign opened on the eleventh.

19/05/44

Up with the lark this morning for by 0515 hours 8 aircraft led by Capt. J. GASSON (SAAF) were patrolling the CASSINO battle area, and 4 aircraft led by F/Lt. B. GARNER were doing a weather recce and Tac/R of the FOSINONE - AVEZZANO - TIVILI - VALMONTONE area. Then, at 1050 hours, just as 8 of our pilots had gone out to their machines to take off on a CASSINO patrol, some 16 F/W 190 Fighter Bombers broke cloud just over the mountains to the NORTH of us. Fortunately they dropped their bombs in a gully near VENAFRO itself and made off as quickly as they had appeared without doing any damage to the 'drome. Control seemed a bit ropey this morning and 601 Squadron who were on patrol at the time were unable to intercept them. However, 145 Squadron, who were up at ANZIO managed to pick off one before they made base. Afternoon show, an area cover sweep of CIVITA VECCHIA was postponed indefinitely because the

weather was 'clampers', and instead 8 aircraft took off to patrol the CASSINO battle area.

20/05/44

No flying was possible till mid-day but in the afternoon the weather cleared , the sun came up and the battle area patrols recommenced. In all we flew 24 sorties, but all were uneventful.

21/05/44

Twenty-two sorties over the battle area and two bomber escorts, the first to BALTIMORES bombing ROSSASECCA, the second to 24 BOSTONS bombing near the mouth of the TIBER, all missions were uneventful

22/05/44

Sixteen sorties over the battle area and an area sweep by 4 aircraft to BALTIMORES bombing ATINA. Nothing of note apart from the fact that on two occasions our own heavy A.A. opened up on our aircraft. Fortunately no damage was done but one would have thought the Army could recognise a Spitfire by now! This evening 145 SQUADRON ran into 20 F/W 190's and 4 Me 109' near VELLETRI and destroyed 8 of them, 2 F/W 190's falling to S/Ldr. NEVILLE DUKE, DSO, DFC, and BAR. The Hun certainly can't gain much confidence from his rare appearances these days.

Spectacular progress by the FRENCH and the UNITED STATES 85 and 88 DIVISIONS continues on the FIFTH ARMY front, but the HUN is steadily re-enforcing the HITLER LINE or as he prefers to

call it the "DOREY LINE", and he has brought two divisions over from the ADRIATIC front to swell his numbers.

23/05/44

2 aircraft carried out a weather recce NORTH of ROME and as far EAST as AVEZZANO, but found heavy cumulus cloud over the whole area, and In fact throughout the day the weather favoured the enemy, and hampered the heavy bombing programme that had been laid on to assist our troops assaulting the HITLER LINE. We flew 12 uneventful sorties over the battle area in the early afternoon, and then later on 12 aircraft did an area cover of VALMONTONE. The 144 B.25's however, that were supposed to be bombing failed to appear because of the bad weather and with heavy rain and cloud down to deck level, our aircraft landed at LAGO, where they remained till conditions improved. Today the C.O., S/Ldr. G. J. COX, DFC flew to MALTA in search of liquor for the WING party which is being held in the near future to celebrate the 400th VICTORY. We found a most delicious odd collation awaiting us in the Mess to-night . Two young lambs that the Adjutant had acquired for us had been roasted and we ate them cold with mint sauce, polishing them off with great gusto in the good old HENRY V111 fashion . Lt.. J HARDING (SAAF) and F/Sgt. G. BURDEN reported for flying duties today.

24/05/44

Battle area patrols accounted for 16 sorties today. apart from the fact that F/Sgt. PEACOCK was fired upon by a P.47 near AQUINO, nothing of interest occurred. A lengthy area cover of

VALMONTONE- FERENTINO area brought no joy for the 72 B.26 failed to appear at the rendezvous, and when at length 35 of them straggled over the target area no evidence of bombing could be observed. On land the attack on the HITLER LINE has gone well and with active operations on the ANZIO beachhead in full swing we are not surprised to learn that the bomb lines on the two fronts had joined. The C.O. arrived back from MALTA this evening having only met with moderate success on his quest.

25/05/44

Today was clouded by an accident on the runway when two of our machines collided on their return from patrol. F/Sgt. A. PHILLIMORE was seriously injured and died later. Though he had been with us only a short time he was well liked and very keen, and his loss is a sad blow. In all we flew 18 sorties over the battle area but no enemy aircraft appeared for though they show signs of activity NORTH of ROME over LAKE BRACIANO, few come down here. Our last job of the day was an area cover to 126 medium bombers bombing targets at VALMONTONE FERENTINO and SABIACO and judging from all accounts the targets were well and truly plastered. On land everything goes well; FIFTH ARMY and BRIDGEHEAD TROOPS linked up just SOUTH EAST of LITTORIA , while with the occupation of PIEDMONTE by the EIGHTH ARMY, the break through the HITLER LINE was completed and the enemy withdrew across the RIVER MELFA.

26/05/44

Our first light sortie over the battle area by 6 aircraft was uneventful, but on the second, led by WING COMMANDER S. TURNER DSO, DFC, and BAR our aircraft saw considerable enemy M.T. movement towards CECCANO and were later told by Grubstake to strafe. However by the time they had positioned themselves only one staff car was visible and that escaped serious damage. But a little later they had more luck with an observation post, a farmhouse up in the mountains near AVEZZANO, which was attacked with considerable success by Lt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) who fortunately did not see the hail of light flak that came up behind him as he broke off the attack. An area cover by 12 of our aircraft to 36 BOSTONS bombing FRASCATI was carried out according to plan and when they landed at half past six in the evening, we were released. Three new pilots, F/O. HUTCHINSON (RCAF), F/O. JONES and P/O. HASKETT reported today for flying duties.

27/05/44

Humdrum patrols over the battle area, now reduced to 4 aircraft at a time continued today and apart from a most spectacular advance of the bomb line to the TIBER and through the suburbs of ROME — only to be rigorously amended later — nothing of interest occurred. F/O. “LOBBY” LUNN made a welcome re-appearance today after a month absence with pneumonia. A party developed in the Mess this evening which continued over at 40 SAAF and later at 244 WING Mess, and on the morning we were surprised to find some

strange additions to the Mess furniture!! The 'black' however has since been remedied.

28/05/44

Four aircraft who were on patrol at 0600 hours this morning saw some KITTYHAWKS bombing and strafing enemy transport on the AVEZZANO - CARSOLI road, while a further 4, airborne in a great hurry because 324 WING had gone U/S with a cross wind found themselves relieved 10 minutes after commencing patrol by 'streamer' aircraft who apparently had not been informed that their 'drome was U/S and had taken off in the usual manner!! 2 more battle area patrols in the afternoon ended a very dull day's flying, a day moreover in which no suitable bombing targets were forthcoming.

29/05/44

This morning 12 of our aircraft provided area cover to 36 BOSTONS bombing FRASCATI and though bombing was seen, we did locate a considerable number of enemy M.T. on the AVEZZANO - SORA road near CAPRISTELLO, but as strafing is no longer permitted there was little we could do about it. After a battle area patrol by 4 aircraft in the early afternoon we were released and the pilots betook themselves to the river for dinghy drill. A most excellent party developed in the Mess this evening in the course of which 7 bottles of gin were consumed and innumerable 'old favourites' sung and one or two new ones hailing from CANADA added to our repertoire.

30/05/44

Four aircraft were on OPS ROOM Readiness from first light until 0800 hours, but as usual these days, were not required to take to the air. An uneventful battle area patrol was followed by two escort missions by 8 aircraft, on each occasion to two Tac/R Spitfires of 40 SAAF who were photographing stretches of the TIBER North EAST OF ROME. For us these patrols were without incident, though we did our best to boost up morale in the P.O.W. Camp near MORICONE by doing 8 rolls over the camp. The late afternoon saw us fitting Long Range Tanks for a close escort to MARAUDERS that were bombing targets NORTH and SOUTH of ROME. 8 aircraft led by Capt. J. GASSON (SAAF) in his last operational trip with the Squadron, for he is now O.T.E; and F/Lt. B. GARNER escorted the first 24 bombers while the remaining 4 aircraft led by F/O. L. MONTGOMERIE (NZ) together with 4 aircraft of 417 Squadron (RCAF) provided cover for the second batch of 24. Bridges were the targets on each occasion but the really exciting time came when the bombers had left and our aircraft sweeping NORTH of Rome saw some Me 109's taking off from FABRICA in a cloud of dust. One of them after a quick circuit, landed again and had just taxied into his dispersal bay under some trees when Capt. J. GASSON and his No. 2, F/O. HUTCHINSON, diving down while the others remained as top cover made two attacks on the Me 109 and not only left the aircraft in flames but strafed the ground crews as well!! Must have shaken the Heine boys rigid!!

31/05/44

Six sorties today, twice escorting No. 40 SAAF Squadron Tac/R along the RIVER TIBER and covering and area cover sweep of FRASCATI, saw much bombing in that area. This month 5 enemy aircraft — 1 Me 109 and 4 F/W 190's — have been destroyed with 1 probably destroyed and 9 damaged, bringing the Squadron total to 313½ destroyed, 105 probably destroyed and 185 damaged. A total of 1020 operational hours (783 sorties) and 72 non-operational hours (91 sorties) have been flown during the month. The WAR SAVINGS CERTIFICATE WEEK was held from 25th MAY to 3rd JUNE and resulted in a total subscription of £370. A sweep stake attracted entries amounting to £27 10s. 0d. and the draw was held this evening in the Airmen's Mess. The draw was made by F/Lt. GARNER in the absence of the C.O. S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC. 1228647 L.A.C. EDWARDS (Signal Section)) was the lucky winner of £7 10s. 0d. in SAVING CERTIFICATES. Eleven other numbers were also drawn, and drew Saving Certificates of various amounts for their lucky owner.

01/06/44

Four aircraft led by F/Lt. B. GARNER carried out a battle area patrol in the early morning and saw KITTYHAWKS bombing and strafing the ARSOLI - CARSOLI area and M.T. burning furiously in the mountains North of HIGHWAY 6 near SUBIACO. No further flying took place till 1500 hours in the afternoon when the C.O. S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, led 12 aircraft in an area cover sweep over LAKE ALBANO where BOSTONS and BALTIMORES were bombing

various locations. No results were observed but before returning to base, out aircraft swept North-West over FABRICA - GUIDONIA-VALMONTONE area, but had no joy. On land today there was heavy fighting SOUTH of ROME and later in the evening, VELLETRI, one of the key GERMAN strong points in the line defending ROME was taken. EIGHTH ARMY continued to press forward into the mountains NORTH of HIGHWAY 6 in face of fierce opposition. F/Lt. MONTGOMERIE took over "A" Flight today as Capt. J. GASSON is now O.T.E.

02/06/44

No flying today. Actually we might have had a show at 1745 hours but the pilots were busy doing "dinghy drill" in the RIVER VOLTURNO and could not be contacted in time. Today FERENTINO was occupied by the CANADIANS who are moving up HIGHWAY 6 which has been cut further up near VALMONTE by 13 CORPS.

03/06/44

Two area cover sweeps today, each of 12 aircraft, one early in the morning, the other late in the afternoon. The first was led by W/Commander. DUNDAS, DSO, DFC, patrolled NORTH of ROME while BALTIMORES bombed ammunition dumps near TIVOLI. The second led by the C.O. S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC, covered the area between HIGHWAY 7 and MONTE VELINO. On the last occasion good sport was provided by JERRY motor cyclists. F/Sgt. LANE and F/Sgt. G. CUNNINGHAM-LENY hit one, but the cyclist escaped into a nearby field, while another attacked by F/Lt. I. SMITH and

Lt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) disappeared in a cloud of dust and a third did a smart dive into a ditch and left his cycle on the road. VALMONTONE was captured today while the AMERICANS and the FRENCH linked up SOUTH-EAST of HIGHWAY 6 and the FIFTH and EIGHTH ARMIES pushed NORTH into the hills in pursuit of Huns. Capt. JOHN GASSON (SAAF) was today awarded the DFC — a well-deserved award for apart from his inspiring leadership and unflagging enthusiasm, his record of 3 destroyed, 3 probables, and 6 damaged on his first tour of operations speaks highly of his own personal skill as a pilot. F/Lt. L. HOLT was today posted to 21 M.F.H., we shall be sorry to lose him, but his new post will give him more scope for his undoubted abilities. W/O. DORAN (RCAF) joined us today for flying duties.

04/06/44

Only one show today and that at 1100 hours when WING COMMANDER DUNDAS, DSO, DFC, took 12 aircraft out on an area cover sweep of LAKE BRACIANO and ORTE where they saw M.T. burning on the main road leading out of ROME North of LITTORIO and bags of fighter bombers combing roads and railways in that area. ROME was captured today. Troops which entered at 0800 hours had cleared the city by 2115 hours and the enemy was scurrying North as hard as they could. P/O. STEVENSON reported today for flying duties.

05/06/44

Two sweeps of the LAKE BRACIANO - BOLSENA - FABRICA area today, the first 6 aircraft led by F/Lt. B GARNER took off at 0950

hours and patrolled while MITCHELLS and MARAUDERS bombed various targets in the area. Twenty plus M.T. were seen parked alongside a wood near VEFALLA but apart from this there was no sign of enemy movement on the roads. On the second sweep, carried out by 8 aircraft led by the C.O. S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, medium and fighter bombers ranged over the whole area and little white columns of smoke were seen rising just North of the LAKE. In the late afternoon our 4 readiness aircraft were scrambled on the suggestion of "Y" service but after a short patrol below cloud at 7,000 feet North of FOSINONE, they were told to pancake. Allied troops are now 20 miles NORTH of ROME.

06/06/44

"D" Day at long last! Allies invaded NORMANDY with airborne troops supported by seaborne landings. Our one show of the day was a sweep of VEFALLA - SPOLETA area by 12 aircraft led by the C.O. while MARAUDERS bombed selected targets. Big fires were seen burning in the centre of TERNI after it had been plastered by a heavy concentration of bombs while a road-rail junction on the EAST side of VITERBO and a road bridge at TARQUINIA were well and truly pranged. When our aircraft returned F/Lt. I. SMITH crashed on landing and it was later found that the undercarriage locking bolts were of the wrong type. Subsequently, 23 aircraft in the Wing had to be grounded with the same fault. "SMITHY" is not exactly popular with the "plumbers" now. EIGHTH ARMY troops advancing North along the SORA -

AVEZZANO road, occupied BALSORANO. F/O. TAYLOR and Sgt. SMITH reported today for flying duties.

07/06/44

We were only called upon once today, this time to provide 6 aircraft to sweep TIVOLI – CASTEL MADAMA area but with cloud down to 4,000 feet and closing in more, F/Lt. L. MONTGOMERIE (RNZAF) decided to return. CIOSTA VECCHIA was captured today.

08/06/44

Four of our aircraft were on Ops Room Readiness from first light till 1300 hours, and just after 1700 hours in the afternoon 6 aircraft took off to escort 12 KITTYHAWKS bombing FABRIANO. Unfortunately there was 10/10ths cloud at 5,000 feet and as the KITTYHAWKS were bombing below cloud, we could see nothing of the results.

09/06/44

After an early morning sweep of the PERUGIA area by 6 aircraft, where apart from two explosions on the railway line some 10 miles South OF FOLIGNO nothing of interest was seen. There was no further flying though we had 4 aircraft at Readiness during the afternoon and evening. At dinner tonight we learned that the “A” Party would probably be leaving for our new ‘drome at LITTORIO — on the outskirts of ROME — early the next morning and this was confirmed at 2030 hours. An excellent party given by Capt. J. GASSON DFC (SAAF) and the “Doc” F/Lt. L HOLT, and attended by GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINGCOME DSO, DFC, and BAR, WING

COMMANDER DUNDAS, DSO, DFC, S/Ldr. NEVILLE DUKE DSO, DFC, and TWO BARS, S/Ldr. J. NICHOLLS, DFC, and many others, was held in the Mess tonight and went off in fine style. VITERBO was captured today and the GERMANS began to withdraw on the ADRIATIC COAST.

10/06/44

"A" Party, consisting of 14 vehicles with 1 Trailer and 72 men, led by F/O. EVANS, set off at 0640 this morning for LITTORIO, where they eventually arrived at 1830 hours, after a regular Cook's tour of ROME. Mines were still being exploded on the taxi-way when they arrived, but they soon discovered with the aid of P/O. STEVENSON (who can speak Italian fluently) that the GERMANS had moved out in such a hurry that apart from blowing up the hangers and sowing the odd mine on the taxi-track the field was free. After a quick meal, they slept all night under 'the pale stars' only to be awakened at 0600 hours in the morning by a heavy rain storm! Meanwhile the aircraft still operating from VENAFRO carried out a couple of offensive patrols, one in the morning led by F/Lt. B. GARNER over RIRTI - TERNI - SPOLETO - FOLIGNO, and the other in the evening led by F/Lt. I MONTGOMERIE (RNZAF) in the RIETI - AQUILA - ANTRODOCO area. F/Sgt. A. CONDON (NZ) and F/O. HUTCHINSON (CAN) set a 3 tonner on fire 7 miles S.E. of TROLI on the morning show and disposed effectively of the Jerries who were trying to unhook the trailer attached to it, while "MONTY" stopped a Three Tonner near ANTRODOCO in the evening. (3 days later he saw the sharry in a ditch)

11/06/44

F/Sgt. G. CUNNINGHAM-LENY, who was with F/Sgt. E. BUGDEN was carrying out a weather recce of the RIETI - TERNI - FOLIGNO - PERUGIA area, ran into thick cloud almost down to deck level and after hitting a tree turning Westwards in the direction of CIVITAVECCHIA his engine temperature went off the clock and he forced landed in a field near TORRE FLAVIA. He managed to hitch back to ROME where after wandering about the streets of the City complete with Mae West, parachute and flying helmet, he got out eventually to LITTORIO where we were amazed to see him walk in at 1930 hours in the evening. At VENAFRO the Squadron was at Stand-by Readiness at 1800 hours for LITTORIO, but the order to move was not given.

12/06/44

Seventeen aircraft took off from VENAFRO at 1015 hours for LITTORIO but after orbiting the new 'drome were ordered to return to base where they landed again at 1030 hours. Two offensive sweeps over TERNI - SPOLETO - FOLIGNO - NORCIA - RIETI, each of 4 aircraft, took off at 1800 hours and 1900 hours respectively and landed at LITTORIO after the patrols. F/Lt. B. GARNER who led the second show saw 100 plus M.T. nose to tail in a steep narrow valley leading North-East from SPOLETO towards VISSO. Unfortunately many ambulances were interspersed with the other vehicles in the convoy so no attack was made. However, a couple of vehicles (3 Ton Type) each with a large trailer were attacked by W.O. CONDON (NZ) and F/Sgt. J.

LANE, who left one in flames and the other damaged. The remaining aircraft flew in from VENAFRO landing here at 2050 hours. Most of the pilots bedded down in the Mess tonight while the remainder filled the other three available tents to capacity, and 5 of the 7 bottles of Champagne we had acquired in ROME were poured off, to the high enjoyment of all who shared it.

LITTORIO

13/06/44

Twelve sorties today on offensive sweeps over RIETI. One of them led by F/Lt. L. SMITH in the evening was highly successful for apart from locating about 100 plus M.T. widely spaced along the TERNI - TODI road going North, 4 cars were set on fire (including 1 Staff Car) and two trucks towing gun carriages as well as an A.F.V. were strafed and several soldiers killed. "B" Party joined us today, leaving behind at VENAFRO a small rear party in charge of F/O. LUNN who will come up later.

14/06/44

We were at 30 Minutes from first light until mid-day when 4 aircraft carried out an uneventful patrol of Route 'A'. this was followed by a similar patrol at 1400 hours in the course of which M.T. parked under a tree on a bend, was strafed and left smoking about 5 miles SOUTH of LAKE TRASIMENO. Once again the heavy flak in the PERUGIA area was very accurate and it certainly does not pay to hang around when those boys are on the job. At 1530 hours the Squadron was released and the trucks were organised to

take the men into ROME so that all could have a chance to see what is one of the most magnificent and certainly the most historic of Capitals in Europe. We have all been impressed by the fine buildings, clean spacious streets and not least by the abundance of really pretty girls well dressed and with welcome smiles on their faces. Our first glimpse of civilisation since the squadron left the U.K. ORVIETO was captured today and units of the EIGHTH ARMY are near TERNI.

15/06/44

Today Lt. J. HARDING (SAAF) spun in from 8,000 feet some 15 miles SOUTH-WEST of PERUGIA after being hit by flak a few miles North of LAKE TRASIMENO while strafing a bus. He was one of the four that had taken off at 1000 hours on an offensive patrol of ROUTE "A" - CITTA PIEVE - AREZZO - CORTONA - PERUGIA. We record his loss with deep regret. The only other mission of the day was an area cover sweep in the evening of ANCON where the harbour installations were the target for medium bombers. Flying at 16,000 feet over the area, our pilots saw hits on the centre of the South Jetty and in the South-West corner of the town which caused a fire with white smoke. Heavy flak came up but for a change it was inaccurate so a good time was had by all!

16/06/44

On the move again! "A" Party led by F/O. EVANS left at 0745 hours and taking HIGHWAY 2 (the old VIA CASSIA) out of ROME, drove North through pleasant country; smiling corn fields, tree-lined roads and fragrant hedgerows, littered with the burnt out and

mangled remains of Jerry M.T., till they reached FABRICA some 40 miles to the north. Here in the North-West corner of the landing ground, on pretty, wooded, high ground the camp was sighted. Back at LITTORIO two offensive patrols over route "D" — both by eight aircraft, were carried out — one in the morning, one in the early evening, but neither of them was eventful. GROSSETO and FOLIGNO were captured today, while on the ADRIATIC coast our troops continue to advance unhindered. F/Lt. L. HOLT left us today and we wish him all the luck in his new job at 21 M.F.H.

FABRICA

17/06/44

F/Lt. L. MONTGOMERIE (NZ), landing shortly after 0900 hours this morning was the first of the air party to arrive. He was followed not long after by 12 aircraft which taking off from LITTORIO at 0800 hours had flown offensive patrols over ROUTES A, B, and C. The C.O., S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, who had led the first patrol brought back news that our forward troops appeared to be in MARSCIANO. Generally speaking, the rain and low cloud rendered all three missions abortive. "B" Party arrived in various sections during the morning and afternoon, and by evening the Mess had been erected and the camp fully organised. Unfortunately great clouds of dust blow right across the domestic site when he kites taxi, but we hope that the wind will not always blow from this direction. In the afternoon, WING COMMANDER DUNDAS, DSO, DFC, with Lt. E. MANNE (SAAF) as his No. 2, took off on a weather recce of the AREZZO - TRASEMENO area but

found cumulus cloud down to 4,500 feet, and though 8 more aircraft were sent out later in the evening they ran into more 'dirty weather' and were told to pancake.

18/06/44

The Squadron was at 45 Minutes till 1300 hours but heavy rain showers made flying impossible and though two aircraft set off on a weather recce of PERUGIA and SANSEPPOLCRO areas at 1600 hours in the afternoon they were unable to get further than LAKE TRASIMENO for the cloud was down to deck level and it was raining hard. From a purely selfish point of view we have welcomed the rain for it has laid the dust! We were glad to hear the news today that S/Ldr. J. MORGAN DFC and BAR — one of our old C.O.'s who was forced to bale out over CHIETI at the end of February this year — has now been reported a P.O.W.

19/06/44

Three projected early morning offensive patrols had to be scrubbed because of bad weather and with heavy storms continuing all day no flying was possible and we were released at 1230 hours. A 'liberty' truck went into ROME while others explored the surrounding countryside which is rich in fruit and vegetables — cherries, mulberries, and new potatoes abounding — and a few did some fishing in a nearby reservoir. Forward elements of our troops entered PERUGIA today, while all organised resistance on ELBA 9th to the FRENCH) ceased.

20/06/44

Four aircraft were on readiness from first light but heavy rain again in the morning made the 'drome unserviceable, so for the rest of the day we had 12 aircraft at 30 Minutes available. Cpl. B. MANN has been awarded a MENTION in DESPATCHES — a well deserved award for he has been packing parachutes for the Squadron for over three years and has never had a single failure.

21/06/44

'Drome not serviceable till mid-afternoon and no operational flying took place today. Weather conditions are holding up the advance on land, although CHUISI has been occupied in face of stiffening resistance.

22/06/44

We were covering routes A, B, and C early this morning but apart from BEN GARNER'S 4 over ROUTE 'A' who reported 200 stationary trains with steam up at PORETTA where much shunting activity was going on ('Abe' bound us rigid later for being off course!) there was nothing of interest to report. BEN GARNER also attacked 3 M.T. on the FLORENCE - POPPI road and stopped a packet in the fuselage for his pains, still he got back O.K. though 'Z' won't fly again for some time. No further flying took place and we were released at 1600 hours. An excellent dinner in the Mess tonight — new potatoes, a very welcome change after months of dehydrated stuff — followed by a 'wizard' farewell party given by JOHNNY GASSON — the second of its kind since he first went

O.T.E. Very strong enemy resistance continues on land and no important advances have been made.

23/06/44

We were 30 Minutes Availability all morning but shortly after a weather recce by two of our aircraft on ROUTES A, B, and C, a report of 150 stationary goods waggons near FANO came in and 4 aircraft led by F/Lt. B GARNER took off to have a “shufty”. They were there too — a big concentration mostly of covered wagons just north of FANO in a siding lying between the cliffs and the beach, and after attacking from the sea in a turn from the North at deck level one truck blew up and ammunition exploded in many others. As soon as they were back with their report it was clear here was a first class target, so 10 aircraft of 145 SQUADRON followed 10 minutes later by 12 of ours led by the C.O. took off to carry on the good work. On the trip out, W/O. CONDON (NZ) and his No.2 got separated from the rest and W/O. Condon coming out over ANCONA was heard calling “Is that you JAKE?”, while the remainder arriving over the target found fires and explosions in full swing. ‘MONTY’ added to the destruction by exploding a couple of trucks and setting a third on fire, while ‘TUBBY FAIR’ got another flamer and the C.O. hit what he hoped were petrol tankers, but as some reported later were probably only water bowzers. F/Lt. L. SMITH and his section never managed to make an attack — being foiled on each occasion they tried to go in by the queue of aircraft. By the time it was all over the siding was a shambles. Unfortunately Lt. STEENKAMP (SAAF) had to bale out at 500 feet

a few miles off shore just after the first attack, but was seen to get into his dinghy O.K. 601 SQUADRON aircraft went out to cover him later in the evening but failed to locate him. Still there was an off shore wind so he may have drifted further NORTH unless the Jerries picked him up. Capt. J. GASSON DFC (SAAF) left us this morning by AUSTER for BARI, en route to SOUTH AFRICA, taking with him the best wishes of the Squadron for a well-deserved rest. We hope that he may soon rejoin us. It is with deep regret that we heard today that S/Ldr. ROGER BUSHELL who formed this Squadron on 10th OCTOBER 1939 and who was shot down over FRANCE on MAY 23rd 1940, was one of those pilots shot in GERMANY at STALAG LUFT 3. At present there is something of a lull in the fighting out here, but in NORMANDY the battle of CHERBOURG is on. 417 Squadron is busy doing practice bombing with 250 lb. and 500 lb. bombs. 145 SQUADRON have also been selected for fighter bomber work, while 601 SQUADRON and ourselves still strafe.

24/06/44

The search for Lt. STEENKAMP continued this morning when P/O. C. YOUNG (NZ) and F/Sgt. F. HANSON directed by PYREX (forward fighter) swept over the sea at 300 feet about 3 miles off shore between RIMINI and VESERBA but though many fishing boats were seen in the area, there was no sign of 'STEENIE'. We hope he has been picked up by one of them for during the rest of the morning and afternoon bad weather clamped down. A CATELINA and several launches were out searching for him

without success. Two patrols - 8 aircraft in all - over ROUTE B and C (general area AREZZO - URBINO - UMBERTIDE) at first light brought back news that cloudy conditions prevailed over most of the area and though we had 4 aircraft on readiness from 1300 hours until last light we were not called upon except at 1730 hours when Lt. V. BOY (SAAF) and F/O. JONES did a weather recce of MONTEVARCHI where 50 petrol tankers had been reported in a siding. Unfortunately there was much cloud over the area and nothing could be seen. In the evening we went over to WING to see our strafing films of recent weeks but apart from W/O. J. Lane and W/O. A CONDON (NZ) no one had any decent shots. Many of the films were hopelessly under-exposed. It appears that the stops on the cameras have been wrong and now that this has been remedied we look for better results. Starting from today a liberty truck is leaving camp at 0800 hours in the morning and is taking 20 men daily to ROME. A general attack of enemy positions East and West of LAKE TRASIMENO began at dawn this morning and satisfactory progress is recorded.

25/06/44

A heavy thunderstorm last night made the 'drome unserviceable all day and we were at a nominal state of 60 Minutes Availability till released at 1700 hours. 4 'Sea-fire' pilots of the Fleet Air Arm arrived today on liaison. They are Sub-Lieutenants ROBINSON, MORRIS, STEPHENS and LITTLE.

26/06/44

We broke new ground this morning when 6 of our aircraft were over FIFTH ARMY preserves in the neighbourhood of VITERA – PISA and CECINI in search of transport. The enemy however is well aware that it is unhealthy to travel by day on the roads unless he has to, so both this patrol and a parallel one carried out over ROUTE “A” proved fruitless. In fact, apart from a report in the evening from Lt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) of scattered M.T. movement to and fro between ORTONA and CASTIGLIONE, the 24 sorties flown in the course of the day were entirely negative.

27/06/44

At 0700 hours this morning 12 aircraft led by the C.O., F/Lt. B. GARNER and F/Lt. L MONTGOMERIE (NZ) took off for SAN VITO (on the ADRIATIC COAST, just NORTH of PENNA POINT) for bomber escort work. A pleasant day was spent as guests of 244 WING TRAINING FLIGHT and after 12 sorties in the morning in support of 24 BALTIMORES — in boxes of 12 aircraft which were bombing a railway bridge at RIMINI — the rest of the day was spent sunbathing and bathing. Our aircraft returned here at 1715 hours in the evening and shortly afterward were released for the day. Many of the pilots, among them the 4 FAA pilots, F/Lt. L. SMITH and Lt. E MANN who were not on the show today went into ROME where they stayed the night at the REALE HOTEL and had an enjoyable time, though they weren't there long enough to get organised.

28/06/44

Over to the other side again. This time we were briefed to land at TORTORETTO (a landing ground just SOUTH of the TRONTO RIVER) but after the C.O. had landed safely, Lt. M. LAWTON next in, burst a tyre on the rough strip and went up onto his nose and the remaining 10 aircraft were ordered to land at PESCARA where they were rejoined by the C.O. Here at 3 SAAF WING as the guests of 12 SQUADRON we remained and as the weather up North made bombing operations impossible, our services were not required and 10 aircraft returned to base at 1645 hours. F/o. STEVENSON who had a burst tyre came back later in the evening, while Lt. M. LAWTON stayed overnight at TORETTO as the guest of 241 SQUADRON. KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING this afternoon were chased by 12 F/W 190's near RIMINI so the HUN has re-appeared at last.

29/06/44

We'll say he has re-appeared — in strength too — for 6 of our aircraft operating from PESCARA to which the Squadron had flown early in the morning — while escorting 12 BALTIMORES of No. 21 SAAF to the marshalling yards at CESENA were attacked by 25 to 30 Me 109's and F/W 190's who seemed to fill the sky. In the dice that ensued Lt. BOY (SAAF) managed to get in a telling burst from 400 yards and claims a F/W 190 damaged for it spun down to deck level before managing to pull out. High lights of the running fight which lasted roughly half an hour and was continued from the target area to SOUTH of ANCONA, occurred when F/Lt. L SMITH

shook off 4 Me 109's that had fastened onto his tail by a series of steep turns at full bore, when Lt. V. BOY and his No. 2 - Sub Lt. ROBINSON were jumped by 11 Me 109's but managed to extricate themselves somehow and when F/Lt B. GARNER was pursued and gradually overhauled as he flew full out at deck level. Fortunately, three of them broke just North of ANCONA but one 'persistent bastard' as F/Lt. GARNER put it came on closing to 500 yards. Here F/Lt. GARNER broke into him and after an exchange of fire the Me 109 made off North while F/Lt. Garner raced for home. All the bombers with the exception of one which was hit in the port engine and crashed landed at TORTORRETO — got back safely — blissfully unaware that there had been enemy fighters in the area, and reporting their fire as intense light flak! — at 12,000 feet too! Some guns. What a break-in for the 'wet footed boys', three of whom — Sub Lts. MORRIS, STEPHENS and ROBINSON were flying No. 2 to F/Lt. B. GARNER, F/Lt. L. SMITH and Lt. V. BOY. They and their aircraft acquitted themselves magnificently and it is an occasion that will live in their memories for many a long day. In addition 10 more sorties were flown, 6 in the morning and 4 in the afternoon — the latter in conjunction with 417 SQUADRON in escort to BALTIMORES of 223 SQUADRON bombing the same targets at CASENA. Two sorties were flown in an unsuccessful search for two dinghies reported off ANCONA. Our aircraft returned to base in the evening.

30/06/44

TODAY we were over on the other side again to operate from PESCARA but after escorting 16 BALTIMORES of an HELLENIC SQUADRON (5 of which turned back) to FAEZA where one bomber blew up over the target — 3 only of our aircraft were able to land at PESCARA and the remainder put down at SINELLA. Here they stayed till it was time to return. Unfortunately F/Sgt. F. HANSON was forced to stay over there as a SPITFIRE V which ran off the runway collided with his stationary machine and wrote it off. Beer tonight — three bottles per man throughout the Squadron — so long since we had any that we had almost forgotten what it tasted like. During the past month the Squadron has flown 437 Ops hours and 131 Non-operational hours. One Me. 109 damaged during the month.

01/07/44

Tortorella now considered serviceable for our aircraft to land there so this morning 12 aircraft went over there where we found No. 318 (POLISH) SQUADRON, who were very hospitable and helpful and gave us breakfast, a very welcome gift to the gannets who had already had one breakfast of bacon and two eggs, before leaving! In the intervals between swimming and sunbathing time was found to carry out a couple of escort jobs, one to MARAUDERS and the other to BALTIMORES, both bombing LUGO marshalling yards and both groups dropping their bombs in the open fields outside the target. In the now customary fashion we heard at 2200 hours

tonight that the advance party was to leave tomorrow morning for PERUGIA!

02/07/44

Plenty of flying today. Some 22 sorties in area cover sweeps of RIMINI, FAENZA, IMOLA, BOLOGNA areas, where KITTYHAWKS and MUSTANGS were busy pranging railway lines and marshalling yards. At the moment the HUN has not got his flak organised so the mission of the whole area was "a piece of cake!" meanwhile "A" Party, led by F/O. A.R. EVANS, left at 1000 hours for PERUGIA, where they arrived after a 10-hour journey, mostly crawling along through 10/10ths dust, and just having time to get an evening meal before it was dark.

03/07/44

Ten aircraft went over FERMO this morning escorting 12 MARAUDERS from here to IMOLA marshalling yards, which received a good concentration of bombs and after a further job taking 12 BALTIMORES in the afternoon to PORTO CORSINI, where dock installations were well covered, the aircraft landed at PERUGIA. Remainder of aircraft came over from FABRICA in the afternoon, while the OPERATIONS and PARACHUTE SECTIONS arrived in the evening. Majority of us slept put tonight between the rows of vines where the camp is sited. A glorious, bright, moonlight night, so no hardship.

PERUGIA

04/07/44

We managed to get in one escort job in the morning — MARAUDERS going to FAENZA — before a heavy thunderstorm broke over the 'drome and we were released. Opportunity to visit PERUGIA was seized and we found an OFFICERS' CLUB where we were able to get tea and dinner. Not much to buy in shops, "TEDESCHI" having taken it all before they left, but what little was there was cheap enough. "B" Party arrived this morning after a very dusty ride. F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE was today awarded a DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS and we congratulate him heartily on a well-deserved honour.

05/07/44

Squadron at 30 Minutes Availability till 1200 hours when four aircraft carried out a spot of Tac/R work between SIENA and FLORENCE, looking for bridges broken and unbroken, troop movements and M.T. Pilots returned confirmed in the opinion that Tac/R is a specialised job for they had seen "none of those things." Our second and last show of the day was an escort to 12 KITTYHAWKS out on a shipping strike in the RAVENNA area. The small port of COTTOLICA was dive-bombed and a small barge in the river was also hit. F/O. A.D. TAYLOR force landed successfully just after take-off and was located some two miles South of the 'drome by supernumerary Flight Lieutenants SMITH and D. WRIGHT, who orbited him in the AUSTER. "SMITHY" fired red

Verrey cartridges to guide the ground rescue party to the spot — signals which took the gharry straight into the ditch running across a field! However no harm was done and “AL” returned a little shaken but otherwise O.K.

06/07/44

Twenty sorties on bomber escorts, in course of which KITTYHAWKS cut railway lines at LAVAZZOLA, while MARAUDERS appeared to drop their bombs in the centre of FAENZA. Bandits were reported airborne in the EMOLA area during the day but no contact was made. We learned today that we shall be commencing bombing practice in the near future. Once this is completed all Squadrons in the Wing will be bomber operational.

07/07/44

More escorts up to the North East again today — 8 aircraft taking MARAUDERS up to IMOLA where bombs fell in the Northern part of the town and a further six aircraft taking BALTIMORES to PORTO CORSINI. Enemy fighters were reported between RAVENNA and FERRARA, but no attempt was made to attack the bombers which dropped their load about one mile inshore on the North side of the canal. That completed our quota for the day and in the evening a number of us paid a visit to ASSISI — a gem of medieval architecture — where there is an excellent club with wine (or rather “hooch” which burned with a blue flame!) women, and song! Squadron released for 48 hours for bombing practice.

08/07/44

Bombing practice commenced today. Each pilot is to drop 4 x 500 lb. bombs. Florescene can markers used for targets. Practice bombing area roughly between CIOSTA VECCHIA and ORBEVELLO. Officers attended a party given by GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINGCOME, DSO DFC and BAR at WING Mess this evening to celebrate his first anniversary in command of the Wing.

09/07/44

Bombing practice continued today and all pilots after initially finding it rather more difficult than they had expected, have made excellent progress, are proficient and await the testing time with confidence.

10/07/44

Up to lunch time we were released from operational calls in order to complete our bombing practice, but thereafter we were let loose on a couple of targets near SAN GIOVANI. The object in this case was to cut the roads effectively, but though 31 sorties in all were flown one road remained unharmed, while the other received direct hits. However the barrage from light and heavy flak in the area was intense, so the change over from practice conditions was drastic. LIEUTENANT L.G. LLOYD, FLEET AIR ARM, arrived today for liaison duties, and we were glad to see F/O. J. LONGSTAFF back after 10 days absence with malaria.

11/07/44

An early morning bombing mission was cancelled owing to low cloud and bad weather over the target, but following a weather recce in the afternoon of the AREZZO - PONTASIEVA area, 11 sorties were flown to the San GIOVANI area where a road junction just East of the River was the target. Once again the light flak gunners put up a carpet of fire and though several near misses were scored the road remained uncut. So many bombs have been aimed at this point that it just isn't true. Sub Lt. D.S. ROBINSON, FLEET AIR ARM, left us today to return to GIBRALTAR, while two POLISH pilots, F/LIEUTENANTS O. SZARZYNSKI and J. PREIMS reported today for flying duties.

12/07/44

Eight aircraft were rushed off at short notice early this morning to attack 50 M.T. that some keen but hopelessly clueless type had thought he had located in a wood near PELAGO, about 10 miles east of PONTASIEVA. When they got there, they found a densely wooded area and though a number of haystacks were visible among the trees not more than a few widely dispersed vehicles were about. Bombs were dropped but no results observed. At lunch time and at intervals for the rest of the day we were out bombing strategic road junctions at BADIA, TEDALDA, IESI, ACQUALONGA and SAN GIOVANNI (whose inhabitants God preserve!) with some measure of success. A NAAFI ration of beer was issued this evening, while the airmen received in addition a supply of

champagne. "Sounds of revelry by night" re-echoed through the camp.

13/07/44

BADIA TEDALDA was attacked twice today; first by three aircraft, later by eight aircraft, two direct hits being scored on the road junction while a third fell on a road-fork about five miles South-West of the target. A road junction at MERCATELLO was also bombed during the course of the day and two direct hits scored. A generous supply of greengages and peaches (for this our thanks go to the ADJUTANT and Cpl. BROOKES, his henchman) appeared at dinner in the Mess Tonight and it was forthwith suggested that the COMMANDING OFFICER open up a greengrocery department in his trailer to be run conjointly with his "hooch" store.

14/07/44

Heavy bombing programme. Some 28 sorties over selected targets. Road cuts effected near BORGO PACE, three direct hits on road intersection followed two attacks on ACQUALONGA, while two direct hits were scored on the road near PIAN- DI MELETO and the railway line was cut five miles South of URBINO. A search for a suspected Do 217 and six M.T. near SENEGALLIA was ineffective. Twelve sorties were also flown in support of BALTIMORES bombing ammunition dumps camouflaged in fields and trees midway between PISTOIA and FLORENCE but no apparent results were visible from the air. On the last show of the day four of our aircraft which had been asked to bomb the electric railway between FORLI and CESENA and at the same time provide area

cover to six MUSTANGS bombing CERVIA found the whole area covered with thunderclouds down to 3,000 feet so returned and dropped their bombs on a road junction near FEMMIGNANO. The COMMANDING OFFICER flew down to MALTA today on very important business!

15/07/44

Between first light and 0930 hours this morning 20 bombing sorties were carried out on;- PIAN- DI MELETO where two bombs fell on the Eastern outskirts of the town, flak opposition coming from guns mounted on the roof tops; ACQUALONGA where the road leading South out of the town was hit; BADIA TEDELDA; St. ANGELO where two bombs fell on buildings in the town; and OSTRÀ where a road junction receive one direct hit. In the evening MEREATO and St. LORENZO were each attacked by four aircraft, while eight aircraft dropped bombs on ammunition and store dumps near the railway station at BIBBIENA

16/07/44

BADIA TEDALDA and St. ANGELO were attacked at first light with moderate success and W/O. A.T. CONDON and F/O. R.T. HUTCHINSON followed up the bombing attack by strafing an armoured car near SASSOCORVORA. OSTRÀ on the ADRIATIC front, was twice attacked , two direct hits being scored on the junction and on the road South-West of the town, while four more of our aircraft finding URBANIA too heavily defended, attacked PIOBBIO where the approaches to a bridge over a river were hit. The last show of the day was an eight aircraft attack on the main

road between POPPI and PONTESIEVE. Weather conditions were not particularly favourable for bombing for visibility was poor while intense flak did not ease the task.

17/07/44

Twenty sorties were flown today with the object of cutting the railway line from BOLOGNA to the ADRIATIC coast. The point selected for attack was some five miles North-West of IMOLA and in all three direct hits were scored on the main line.

18/07/44

Targets for the first light patrols were the road junction four miles West of FOSSOMBRONE and BADIA TEDALDA. Heavy cloud obscured the FOSSOMBRONE area so our aircraft unloaded on the main road some ten miles North Of PIEVE SAN STEPHANO where they scored two direct hits, while the road junction in BADIA TEDALDA also received two direct hits. At 1100 hours we received instructions to detach one Flight (consisting of eight aircraft and 12 pilots) over to CECINA on the west coast for an unspecified length of time. By 1530 hours the road party of some 18 vehicles, stores trailer and 70 men, led by F/O. A.R. EVANS, set out. Heavy thunderstorms hampered progress but we managed to reach ORVIETO more or less intact by 2100 hours and we spent the night in the empty AERONAUTICAL COLLEGE in the centre of town. Meanwhile, an afternoon patrol led by FLIGHT LIEUTENANT B.L. GARNER between IESI and the ADRIATIC coast located 30 to 40 M.T. near OSTRÀ and attacked with bombs scoring three direct hits on the road in the centre of the transport. Another four aircraft

who went out a little later joined in the fray, bombing and strafing. In the evening two attacks were made on a bridge near FIUMESCINO on the coast but though the railway line and road nearby were both hit, the bridge itself was undamaged.

19/07/44

Two attacks — eight sorties in all — were made on road junctions in the BADIA TEDALDA area during the morning, after which an exceptionally violent thunderstorm made flying impossible. Very heavy rain flooded the airfield and camp site and hailstones a quarter of an inch in diameter wrecked the maize field. The Discip. tent blew down and amidst the chaos five bottles of “champers” were broken! In the meantime the “A” party were having their own spot of bother — on the road by 0630 hours we intended to strike the coast road (Highway 1) by taking the lateral route via St. LORENZO, PITIGLIANO and MANCIANO (Highway 74).

Unfortunately, at PITIGLIANO we learned that a bridge had been blown that morning and it was impossible to get through, so eventually, after passing and re-passing through one little village no less than three times to the amusement and delight of the whole population who cheered lustily on the last occasion, we found a through route via CANINO striking Route 1 North of TARQUINIA. Here we were an unscheduled convoy in “FIFTH” territory so had to take “pot-luck.” The AMERICANS however were very co-operative and we were able to reach FALLONICA before bivouacking for the night — only one vehicle missing, this we

learned later had been separated from us earlier and had made its own way via SIENIA.

20/07/44

From FALLONICA "A" party obtained a 'schedule' to CECINA where they arrived at 0830 hours. Our dispersal lies in the North-East corner of the 'drome and we picked a camp site between the railway and the road — well back from the 'drome which is exceptionally dusty. Pilots and aircraft arrived by 1130 hours and the Commanding Officer having approved the site, tents were erected. Through the good offices of FLYING OFFICER 'LOBBY' LUNN (from down FOGGIA way) we have taken over five rooms in a largish house from the ITALIANS and here we use a large ground floor room for lounge and bar and remaining rooms for Officers' quarters. It is wonderfully cool and airy here but our sleep is somewhat disturbed by night flying BOSTONS and BALTIMORES of 232 WING. As for our job here; we are A.C.I controlled by 886 A.M.E.S. (Squadron Leader Mission) and our object is the interception and destruction of enemy recce kites flying down the coast from the North. During the day we shall have two aircraft on readiness, and two aircraft on 15 Minutes, while at dawn and dusk we shall have two aircraft on patrol and two on Readiness. This afternoon minesweepers were operating off the coast from LEGHORN so we brought two aircraft to readiness at 1500 hours. At 1940 hours F/Lt. B.L. GARNER and F/O. R.T. HUTCHINSON carried out a dusk patrol. Meanwhile at PERUGIA the rest of the Squadron was released for the day and in the afternoon two liberty

runs were arranged, one to ASSISI visiting ancient churches and buildings, the other to PERUGIA visiting “modern dens of iniquity.”. Both outings were popular. The following pilots are on detachment at CECINA:- S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, F/Lt. B.L. GARNER, F/Lt. D. WRIGHT, F/Lt. J. PREIHS, F/Lt. O. SZARZYNSKI, Lt. V. BOY, Lt. M.H.D. LAWTON, Lt. E. MANNE, F/O. R. C. HUTCHINSON, W/O. J. LANE, W/O. M.J. DORAN, Sgt. C. SMITH. Also there are F/Lt. R.M. GALVAN (MEDICAL OFFICER), F/O. J. LUNN (EQUIPMENT OFFICER), F/O. A. P. EVANS (INTELLIGENCE OFFICER)

21/07/44

A real fillip to morale today, for the COMMANDING OFFICER, S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC and Lt. E MANNE intercepted a Ju 188 towards the end of the dawn patrol and eventually shot it down a few miles South East of the ‘drome to our great delight for we were able to see the final attacks which sent the big bomber down in a vertical dive from 10,000 feet with the starboard engine in flame. Brilliant controlling enabled our aircraft to attack out of the sun and the advantage was pressed home by the commanding officer who crippled the enemy aircraft in his first attack. Two aircraft were scrambled in the afternoon but the plot faded and the dusk patrol North-West of LEGHORN was uneventful except for the persistent aggressive attitude of two SPITFIRES of No. 93 SQUADRON. If they only knew how near they were to death! This evening we went over with S/Ldr. MUSSON (SENIOR CONTROLLER, No. 886 A.M.E.S) to inspect what was left of the Ju

188 and if possible to find a “bony finger” for SQUADRON LEADER N.F. DUKE, DSO, DSF, and BAR of No. 145 SQUADRON!

Wreckage was scattered over a wide area and what of interest had escaped destruction had been collected by some AMERICANS who had handed papers over to their WAR GRAVES COMMISSION. We shall have to chase them up. Lt. E. MANNE flew over to PERUGIA in the morning to collect mail and returned in the afternoon. Ten sorties were flown from PEERUGIA today, in the course of which a road junction near BAGNO received a direct hit while two fell in the woods nearby . P/O. D. KING and F/Sgts. J. PEACOCK, F.M.P. HANSON, and H.V. BUGDEN left today on the conclusion of their operational tour — the last two FLIGHT SERGEANTS cheered by the news which arrived this morning that they had been recommended for commissions by the A.O.C. In the evening the PRINCIPAL MEDICAL OFFICER, GROUP CAPTAIN PIMLEY, paid us the doubtful honour of a visit of inspection. The ADJUTANT, a sadder, and we hope a wiser man, was later seen at ASSISI apparently trying to drown his sorrow in the saintly atmosphere of the Officers’ Club. F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE reported today for flying duties.

22/07/44

The morning patrols were uneventful but in the evening F/Sgt. B.L. GARNER and his No. 2 patrolling West of LEGHORN at 27,000 feet tally-hoed a silvery single-engine aircraft flying at 30,000 feet. He chased it South as far as ELBA before losing it in the haze — later at about 2030 hours he obtained a visual on an aircraft some 20

miles away flying West to East over the sea. He started to cut it off but it went into a dive at high speed and was lost. In view of the fact that the recce kites were coming in higher, it has been decided to step up patrol height to 30,000 feet. WING COMMANDER S. TURNER. DSO, DFC, and S/Ldr. N.F. DUKE, DSO, DFC, and BAR, came over to see us today and after lunch and a swim the COMMANDING OFFICER accompanied them back to PERUGIA for WING COMMANDER H. DUNDAS, DSO, DFC, birthday party! We understand a good time was had by all and that some of the E.N.S.A. girls who were there extended their repertoire of songs quite considerably in the course of the evening. Meanwhile the remainder of the Squadron was busy up at RAVENNA today making a couple of attacks (eight sorties in all) on road junctions some three miles North-West of the City, and following up these with a six aircraft attack on the marshalling yards. As we should not like to embarrass "the bomber boys" we will forbear to talk of the results! Still they had their thrill for the day when MISS NITA COLE, lovely E.N.S.A. artiste in a very decolette gown took afternoon tea in the Mess. Certain officers we hear immediately betook themselves to ops. Thoughtfully rubbing their unshaven chins and those who remained were suffering from eye-strain in the evening!

23/07/44

Four aircraft, in relays of two, patrolled between LEGHORN and GORGONA ISLANDS from first light to 0800 hours — the first section at 30,000 feet, the second at 15,000 feet — but apart from

the interception at 0700 hours of a B.25 flying North, the patrols were uneventful. A state of readiness of two aircraft was maintained throughout the day — pilots reclining in a couple of dinghies finding what shelter they could from the boiling sun in the lee of the Ops. gharry. An evening patrol at 30,000 feet was carried out West of LEGHORN but shortly after reporting a bogey "Recruit" failed and nothing was seen. We were pleased this morning to see the ADJUTANT, F/Lt. G.L. TRAVIS and F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE. DFC, who had flown over in the AUSTER to pay us a visit. Today we learned that we were to move to ROSIGNANO AIRFIELD on 25th JULY — a blow after we had got so well organised. F/O. J. LUNN was taken into Hospital this evening with suspected malaria. NAAFI supplies, in the shape of whiskey, gin, cordials, etc., arrived by truck tonight from PERUGIA. From PERUGIA four aircraft attacked a road junction some three miles West of RAVENNA during the morning scoring one hit on the side of the road and in the evening in the course of an armed recce by six aircraft two direct hits were scored on the main SPEZIA - REGGIO road, about six miles East of PIUZNANO

24/07/44

Early morning patrols between 23,000 and 25,000 feet in the area of CAPRAIA ISLANDS were without incident but in the afternoon two aircraft were scrambled to intercept a recce kite flying South down the coast. After reaching the CECINA area the plot faded and was not picked up again, and after a short patrol at 25,000 feet off CAPRAIA, the aircraft pancaked. The enemy was obviously out to

get all possible information for the evening patrol, led by F/Lt. B.L. GARNER, tally-hoed a twin-engine aircraft about 30 miles North-West of LEGHORN flying South at 31,000 feet some six to eight miles away. F/Lt. GARNER and his No. 2, F/Lt. D. WRIGHT, gave chase using every trick they knew and extracting every ounce of power from their machines, but though they succeeded in reducing the gap to 1,000 yards as it (probably an Me 410) turned South-West, the enemy aircraft steepened its dive, turned to the North and drew away! Vectors throughout were excellent but the old SPITFIRE VIII just could not hold the Me. Two other aircraft which had been scrambled climbed to 18,000 feet and then were told to pancake as their services were not required. At PERUGIA the Squadron was released for the day — and they call this “the rest camp!”

25/07/44

Four aircraft, in relays of two aircraft, maintained constant patrol from first light until 0800 hours. The first section patrolling uneventfully — 32,000 to 30,000 feet — from GORGONA ISLANDS to 40 miles NORTH; the second patrolling from GORGONA and LEGHORN at 20,000 feet. Shortly before 0700 hours a “bogey” was reported flying South but it turned back before contact could be made. In the course of the day we moved camp to ROSIGNANO AIRFIELD where the COMMANDING OFFICER had selected a very pleasant site among the vines in the South-East corner of the ‘drome well back from the dust. Operational commitments remained unimpaired throughout and tonight we sent off four

aircraft on a dusk patrol in a determined effort to catch the recce kite. Once again it made its appearance, both sections obtaining a tally-ho, but once again its high speed enabled it to avoid combat though its mission was probably foiled. Seventeen sorties were flown today from PERUGIA in attacks on bridges, one midway between FORLI and CESENI, another 20 miles North-East of BOLOGNA. The bridges remained intact but roads in the area were cratered. S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC, returned to PERUGIA where his presence had been anxiously awaited, arriving there at 1200 hours and at 1345 hours some 90 members of the Squadron were assembled outside the Ops. tent and paraded on the edge of the runway. Two DC 3's landed and a few minutes later HIS MAJESTY THE KING drove past. The spontaneous cheering that ensued was led by the COMMANDING OFFICER. Three USA NCO's were our guests this evening.

26/07/44

Uneventful morning and evening patrols in the LEGHORN - SPEZIA area. Excellent bathing is available at ROSIGNANO and gharries run to the beach each afternoon. From PERUGIA a total of ten sorties were flown — four against a bridge some 10 miles North of LUCCA; six against a bridge at CESANATICO on the coast south of CERVIA. An excellent coverage of this latter target was obtained, direct hits were made on the bridge itself, the approaches to it and on the railway itself.

27/07/44

The dawn patrols — 31,000 feet to 25,000 feet between LEGHORN and GORGONA ISLANDS were uneventful apart from a little trouble over call signs — some confusion between “SPENCER” and PYREX” which caused us much amusement later. A gharry arrived from the other side during the morning bringing us additional tentage of which we were sadly in need. Actually now that it has come everyone is too lazy to move and for the time being we remain where we are. F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE, DFC, came over in the evening and we enjoyed listening to a solid hour’s “line shoot” on the “stupendous achievements” of our “bomber boys!” The Hun was about this evening on the last light patrol being reported eight miles off PISA, coming South at 25,000 feet, but though we were vectored all over the sky we saw nothing of him. Towards the end of the patrol an aircraft did a calibration test flying over the drome at 34,000 feet making magnificent vapour trails. The COMMANDING OFFICER flew over to PERUGIA this morning. Today we came under the operational control of M.O.R.U. “B” — “PYREX” — “Good old Pyrex, Pyrex of the Sangro” as a rather affected voice told us over the phone last night. What with an abundance of plums, pears and tomatoes the “DOC” is very busy these days with fly-traps, pot-perming and sprays and we must say his efforts have been rewarded for the mess is pleasantly free from flies — the fruit is uncontaminated, while the cookhouse and its environs are cleaner than they have been for many a long day. No mean achievement that! No. 600 SQUADRON, who moved up to this airfield today, shot down a Ju 87 in the vicinity of the

'drome tonight. From PERUGIA four aircraft on a First Light patrol attacked a road junction five miles North-West of FIRENZUCIA, scoring two direct hits on a road, while 14 sorties were flown in attacks on the main line railway between PRATO and CASTIGLIONE. The Rest Hotel at ASSISI for officers opened hospitable doors aided by one Italian beauty (one destroyed reported, no probables and no damaged!)

28/07/44

A Hun "SHUFTI" kite about at first light this morning but cloud layers from 25,000 feet to 32,000 feet masked him effectively from our SPITFIRES. Two aircraft who were waiting to take off on the subsequent patrol were scrambled but shortly afterwards resumed normal patrol from GORGONA ISLAND to within ten miles of SPEZIA. A couple of aircraft were scrambled in the course of the morning to investigate the vapour trails in the LEGHORN area, while at last light F/Lt. B.L. GARNER and No. 2 carried out the usual patrol. No HUNS about but plenty of shipping activity in and near SPEZIA for four large and 12 small ships were seen passing through and proceeding South beyond the boom. A report was made but whether any further steps were taken we have been unable to ascertain. F/O. "LOBBY" LUNN rejoined us at lunch time in a somewhat dazed condition after a quiet few day in an AMERICAN HOSPITAL, where he had consumed pills at a rate of 48 a day! We have arranged to re-fuel Tac/R SPITFIRES of No. 225 Squadron the mob in ROSIGNANO and we are feeding seven men from a No. 285 WING detachment. S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC, returned

this evening from PERUGIA, where 14 sorties had been flown on a railway bridge near LUCCA which however remained unimpaired in spite of their efforts. The COMMANDING OFFICER'S trailer has been repainted. It is hard to believe that two years ago it tumbled through the streets of CAIRO in the road which led to ALAMEIN.

29/07/44

The early morning patrols were without incident. In the afternoon at an informal meeting in the Mess between WING COMMANDER S. TURNER DSO, DFC, SQUADRON LEADER G.J. COX DFC and SQUADRON LEADER MUSSOM tactics for dealing with "shufti kites" were discussed. For the evening patrol it was decided that one section should patrol the LEGHORN area as usual at 30,000 feet and be vectored on to any "bandit" flying South, while the second section taking off some 20 minutes later were to patrol off SPEZIA at 30,000 feet, keeping a watching brief and intercept the enemy as he turned North for home. These tactics however could not be tried out. For one thing the "shufti" did not appear, and the other, Lt. V. BOY returned early with oxygen trouble so the COMMANDING OFFICER and F/Lt. J. PREIHS carried out the normal patrol, North to South off LEGHORN at 28,000 feet. F/Lt. B.L. GARNER returned to PERUGIA today. "The bomber boys" attacked a railway bridge today some five miles South of ARGENTA, one bomb dropping very close to the North end of the bridge on the railway line. A power house in the same area was also strafed. This was actually the only mission of the day for rain storms set in and no further flying took place. F/Lt. B.L. GARNER

concluded his tour and F/Lt. J.E.L. SMITH was reposted to us as FLIGHT COMMANDER.

30/07/44

F/Lt. D. WRIGHT led the dawn patrol at 30,000 feet just East of GORGONA ISLAND, 15 to 20 miles off coast, and after his No. 2 had returned with engine trouble, a “bogey” was reported to the North-West. Various vectors were given, but later it was decided that he had been chasing himself! In the early afternoon the two Stand-by aircraft were scrambled but almost immediately were told to pancake as the plot turned friendly. The evening patrols were quite uneventful. WING COMMANDER H. DUNDAS DSO, DFC, came over to ROSIGNANO this afternoon. F/O. W.R. FAIR flew F/O. J.R.M. LONGSTAFF over in his AUSTER this afternoon. F/O. LONGSTAFF brought us news that the Squadron was getting silver SPITFIRES in the near future. The COMMUNADING OFFICER returned to PERUGIA with the WING COMMANDER. A gharry arrived from PERUGIA in the evening bringing kit for the pilots who are coming over for a spell of fighter work and NAAFI supplies including beer for the men. Late tonight “Y” Service gave us a tip that a Ju 88 would be taking off from BERGAMO early in the morning to do a recce down the coast! From PERUGIA six aircraft bombed a railway bridge six miles East of BOLOGNA, one bomb falling on the embankment 10 yards from the bridge. Later five aircraft returned on a second mission and obtained one near miss.

31/07/44

The dawn patrol led by Lt. V.V. BOY, took off in a state of high anticipation, but unfortunately the Ju 88 failed to materialise and both this and the subsequent patrol were quite uneventful. The evening patrol of two aircraft at 30,000 feet between GORGONA ISLAND and VIA REGGIO was carried out without incident. Lt. V.V. BOY and F/O. Hutchinson returned from ROSIGNANO in the AUSTER while F/Lt. J. PRIEHS and F/Lt. G. SZARZYNSKI flew a couple of SPITFIRES to PERUGIA and then were piloted to ROSIGNANO by P/O. D.A. STEVENSON and P/O. C.F. HACKETT who arrived in the afternoon. F/Lt. J.E.L. SMITH flew to ROSIGNANO to take charge of the FLIGHT. Tonight in the Mess we spent a very pleasant evening, celebrating W/O. G. SANDERSON'S "birthday"(so he said!) and listening to Sgt. J. SCROGGIE'S masterly handling of the "squeeze-box." F/O. "TUBBY" FAIR, who has aspirations that way, sat in rapt amazement at the melodious strains, so different alas!, from his own "jangling chords!" Surgery jokes from the "Doc", songs by various members of the party, and F/Lt. J.E.L. SMITH'S inimitable rendering of a celebrated Irish wrangle kept the party going until the early hours. From PERUGIA four aircraft bombed railway lines North of SAN GIORGIO. Later our two POLISH pilots (F/Lts. J. PRIEHS and SZARZYNSKI) carried out a weather recce in the FAENZA- BOLOGNA-RAVENNA- PESARO area. P/O. C.D. YOUNG and F/Sgt. G. CUNNINGHMA-LENY repeated the recce later, bad weather still continuing. Later in the day F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE DFC, led six aircraft on an armed recce and

ultimately bombed FIVEZZANO starting a fire and minor explosions, believed to be an ammunition dump. During the month 546 operational sorties totalling 660 hours 15 minutes, and 204 non-operational sorties totalling 173 hours were flown; and one Ju 188 was destroyed.

PERUGIA, DETACHMENT AT ROSIGNANO

01/08/44

A recce kite came down the coast this morning when Lt. M.H.D. LAWTON (SAAF) who led the dawn patrol was flying off LEGHORN at 27,000 feet. He was vectored all over the sky between LEGHORN and CORSICA after the HUN without however seeing him, though he turned him on no less than three occasions and was once within half-a-mile of him. Another section which was at Readiness on the ground was scrambled and climbed to 23,000 feet off SPEZIA but they too saw no sign of the E/A; as it turned North, though the plotting board showed it heading straight for them. The whole thing remains something of a mystery for visibility throughout was excellent. Lt. LAWTON returned a rather puzzled and sad man. This was our only piece of excitement today for the evening patrol was uneventful. W/O. LANE flew back to PERUGIA today, while SQUADRON LEADER G.J. COX, DFC returned from PERUGIA in the evening. Thee ADJUTANT (F/Lt. G.TRAVIS) and F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE DFC, came over to see us in the morning and spent the afternoon swimming down at the beach. From PERUGIA six aircraft took off in the morning to bomb gun emplacements East South-East of FOSSOMBRONE — the guns

were observed butt no hits obtained though the bombs fell in the general area. An armed recce in search of transport on roads West and North-west of FLORENCE was carried out in the evening and a road was bombed 15 miles North of PRATO. Lt. V.V. BOY who thought he had been hit by "flak" jettisoned his bomb, while F/Lt. O. SZARZYNSKI, after considerable trouble managed to drop his "safe" in LAKE TRASIMENO.

02/08/44

F/Lt. D. WRIGHT and his No. 2 made an "igri" take-off this morning to investigate vapour trails in the area, but these turned out to have been made by a P.38. Shortly after resuming normal patrol at 20,000 feet, the guns reported a Me 210 flying towards LEGHORN 50 feet above the water, and while Section lost height rapidly to investigate, Lt. E.M. MANNE and his No. 2 were scrambled and flew at high speed 10 miles North of LEGHORN — but the HUN was not seen. In the evening four aircraft gave assistance in an air-sea rescue search off SPEZIA for a dinghy with three occupants who were being shelled by GERMAN shore batteries. Cover was given to a WALRUS and a WARWICK which were carrying out the search, but though the patch of fluoresine was quite visible, there was no sign of a dinghy, and it is believed that the GERMANS picked up the dinghy earlier in the afternoon before the search could be organised. The Last Light anti-recce patrol was uneventful. WING COMMANDER H. DUNDAS and SQUADRON LEADER NICHOLLS came over to see us (or perhaps we should say, to have a bathe) in the afternoon, while in the evening F/O.

LONGSTAFF returned to PERUGIA in the AUSTER piloted by F/O. HUTCHINSON who had come over in the morning bringing "Laddie" over. F/O. LUNN and F/O. STEVENSON spent most of the day roaming round SOLVE in search of "rest-houses" for us - and returned with offers of several rooms in different houses in the Via Mussolini! It is believed that the inhabitants mistook them for estate agents! PERUGIA - After an early morning weather recce of the RIMINI- FERRARA- BOLOGNA area, two separate attacks - one in the morning by six aircraft - the other in the afternoon by five aircraft - were made on a railway bridge ten Miles South-West of FERRARA, in all two bombs five yards from the North-West end of the bridge, one bomb five yards from the South-East end, one bomb in the river below the bridge, while four bombs scored direct hits on the railway line.

03/08/44

This morning we put up two sections - one led by SQUADRON LEADER G.J. COX DFC, patrolling at 600 feet off LEGHORN, the other led by F/O. FAIR doing a similar job at 28,000 feet - hoping in their way to deal with any type of tactics the HUN might use. This morning he came down the coast at 18,000 feet flying South to LEGHORN, before turning South-west towards CORSICA climbing to 30,000 feet. "Tubby" FAIR'S section was vectored with a view to cutting him off as he North-East off CAP CORSO, but the chase was called off and nothing was seen. In the evening two aircraft carried out the usual patrol off LEGHORN at 29,000 feet while two were at Stand-by readiness on the ground. The HUN however did not

appear. F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE DFC flew over from PERUGIA this morning — returning there with S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC, in the evening, while W/O. DORAN also flew there in the morning. At PERUGIA the squadron was released for the day.

04/08/44

An uneventful day - only four operational sorties - two in the morning, two in the evening - both patrolling off LEGHORN. On each occasion two aircraft were at Stand-by Readiness with instructions that if scrambled they were to climb to 20,000 feet and patrol five miles South-South-East of SPEZIA POINT with a view to intercepting the HUN as he turned North for home base. However they were not required. PERUGIA, very cloudy in the morning, followed by a thunderstorm in the afternoon. No operational flying.

05/08/44

The ETON not come down this morning but in the evening F/Lt. SMITH and his No.2 flying at 25,000 feet off LEGHORN got a visual on an Me 210 or 410 some 4,000 feet above them but as soon as it saw them, it turned North and dived into the cloud - which stretched from 22,000 feet to 26,000 feet. We chased it through cloud getting quite close on one occasion according to the Controller but nothing more was seen of it and the chase had to be abandoned. W/O. DORAN and Sgt. C.P.K. SMITH returned to PERUGIA today to exchange with two of the "bomber" boys - one of whom F/Lt. S.M. JONES came over in the afternoon. S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC, returned late in the evening in "merry mood", and a 'gharry' bringing NAAFI supplies - and a sack of fresh potatoes -

arrived shortly after. But where is our mail? PPERUGIA - Four aircraft setting out at first light an armed recce North of FLORENCE found the area covered with 10/10ths cloud and bombed the road midway between PARMA and FIDENZA. One direct hit was scored and a fire was started among the trees which lined the verges. Heavy black smoke came up and it is thought that M.T. may have been hit. Only one other mission was carried out - a weather recce by two aircraft over RIMINI - RAVENA - FERRARA - BOLOGNA. Heavy cloud from the deck up to 16,000 feet covered much of the area, but a gap in the cloud enabled them to bomb midway between RAVENA and CEROLA. Demolitions were also observed at PESARO, An invitation to No. 417 SQUADRON'S open air cinema show was well attended and after ten breakdowns the show finally finished at midnight!

06/08/44

A Me 210 came down off LEGHORN at deck level this morning while our aircraft were busy patrolling at 20,000 feet but though they lost height rapidly and flew up the coast as far as VIA REGGIO they could see nothing of him - neither for that matter was there any sign of a couple of gun boats the BOSTONS claimed to have "pranged" during the night a mile South of the harbour. But never mind! S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC, took the evening patrol flying off SPEZIA at 29,000 feet, but the HUN did not venture forth again. F/Lt. SMITH has arranged with the AMERICAN SPECIAL SERVICE DIVISION (attached to UNITED STATES 34th. DIVISION) for a number of airmen and officers to attend film shows each day at

SOLVE – a most excellent piece of work. PERUGIA - Heavy cloud hampered operations today, two aircraft (carrying bombs) went out at first light to see what weather conditions were like in the RIMINI - RAVENNA - FERRARA - BOLOGNA area and found thick cloud up to 12,000 feet. An effort was made in the afternoon to get things going but the six aircraft that set off for the allotted target found it obscured by cumulus cloud so bombed a level crossing 10 to 12 miles North of BOLOGNA scoring one direct hit. Unfavourable weather put paid to further operations.

07/08/44

This morning we had four aircraft up on the dawn patrol — two flying at 16,000 feet between LEGHORN and GORGONA ISLANDS, and two aircraft flying at 500 feet South-West of SPEZIA. A bogey was reported on one occasion but nothing was seen. In the evening, however, a recce came down and was picked up when it was 15 miles South of SPEZIA at 25,000 feet. F/O. W.R. FAIR and his No. 2 were patrolling in the SPEZIA area at the time, were vectored South-West, while F/Lt. D.WRIGHT and P/O. D.A. STEVENSON who were at stand-by were scrambled and told to climb to 20,000 feet over base. Meanwhile the enemy aircraft came down W.S.W. of LEGHORN turned West for CORSICA with R/O. W.R. FAIR and his No. 2 some four to five miles behind. As they began to close, the HUN first turned North-West jinking hard, then North-East climbing above cloud and though shortly afterwards he was reported directly above our aircraft it was impossible to see him. Lt. E. MANNE and Lt. M.H.D. LAWTON returned to PERUGIA

today and F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE and W/O. A.T. CONDON arrived "for a spell of high altitude work." The ADJUTANT (F/Lt. G.L. TRAVIS) came over this morning in an unsuccessful attempt to "dun" us for our mess bills and at the same time brought the news that F/O. J. LUNN had been posted to No. 114 M.U. From PERUGIA - six aircraft bombed a railway bridge some 15 miles South of FERRARA at mid-day today scoring one direct hit on the centre of the bridge, one on the southern end adjoining the embankment and two near misses. Shortly after the return a heavy thunderstorm broke over base and no more flying was possible.

08/08/44

Enemy "shufti" kites came down low today — F/Lt. D. WRIGHT and W/O. A.T. CONDON patrolling at 30,000 feet early this morning from GORGONA ISLAND to some 15 miles West of VIREGGIO were vectored after an enemy aircraft which they eventually saw six to eight miles ahead slightly above them. It was a twin-engine job but they were unable to identify it though they went full out after it. The HUN gradually drew away. A patrol off LEGHORN at 500/1,000 feet at much the same time was without incident. The evening patrol too was packed with incidents — first of all a couple of Me 109's flying overland and hitting the coast just South of the mouth of the ARNO, turned North flew up to VIAREGGIO where they turned inland again. The C.O. S/Ldr. C.J. COX, DFC and P/O. C.D. YOUNG who were patrolling at 30,000 feet off SPEZIA were vectored after them but it was too late. However shortly after resuming their patrol a bogey was reported coming North-South

from the direction of CORSICA and after a series of vectors, the C.O. S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, saw an Me 410 flying North above 1000 feet above. Unfortunately each time our aircraft tried to climb the enemy aircraft dived slightly and gained relatively, so we stayed below some 2000 yards behind. The HUN headed for GENOA, crossed the coast at right-angles — at the same time firing a double red, and as petrol was short and to follow meant going slap over the A.A. defences at 11,000 feet the C.O. broke off the chase, landing in the dusk with only 18 gallons in his tank. From PERUGIA we made two attacks using ten aircraft in all, on a target near PORTO-MAGGIORE but all bombs fell wide for we were hampered by heavy cloud which partially obscured the target. In the evening bombs were dropped on gun positions in the wooded hills near SAN GORGIS and our aircraft were met with an intense barrage of light flak. All returned safely. F/O. G.H. MEAGHER reported today for flying duties from No. 87 SQUADRON.

09/08/44

S/Ldr. JOHN of No. 260 SQUADRON came over this morning to discuss with the C.O. forthcoming collaboration between SPITFIRES and MUSTANGS and later in the day four MUSTANGS and six pilots with ground personnel arrived and will be staying with us for at least seven days. As a MUSTANG is much faster in a dive than a SPITFIRE, between them they should manage to deal with the old "shufti" kites. The dawn patrol was uneventful but five minutes after they had landed the "stand-by" section was scrambled, but while they were still climbing the bogey turned out

to be a P.39 and they "pancaked" at once. During the day there were a couple of scrambles but on neither occasion was anything seen, and in the evening one section of MUSTANGS patrolled off LEGHORN while the C.O. led three aircraft on a patrol off SPEZIA, the idea being that No. 3 (P/O. D.A. STEVENSON) should act as "Joe" flying several thousand feet below to assist in locating the enemy and directing the other two on to him. Actually nothing of interest occurred while they were patrolling at 9,000 feet off SPEZIA, but when they were returning they saw a B.26 flying up from the Southwest at deck level. Turning to investigate it because no markings could be seen, they followed it North-West towards GENOA — the rear upper gunner opening fire sporadically on the C.O. as he pulled up over him in an arc. However it eventually turned towards CORSICA so we abandoned the chase and returned to base where a night landing was made, the C.O. making a spectacular landing with petrol almost exhausted, while W/O. A.T. CONDON came down with flaps unserviceable. We adjourned to the Mess almost immediately where shattered nerves were speedily repaired. F/O. R.T. HUTCHINSON flew over in the morning bringing same long- awaited mail and magazines from PERUGIA, while S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, who had gone over to the other side in the morning arrived back in the evening just in time to take off his "Groppi's" suit and leap into a kite to lead the last light patrol. From PERUGIA — Four of our aircraft went over to FALCONARA L.G. this morning and operating from there provided top cover to 12 aircraft of No. 145 SQUADRON escorting 18 MARAUDERS bombing ROVIGO. On the way up the coast F/Lt. O.

SZARZYNSKI'S (POLISH) engine out and followed by the remainder of the section which had been ordered to detach itself from the formation he flew out to sea and shortly after giving a 'MAYDAY' his aircraft was seen to crash in the water. Lt. V.V. BOY went down to see if he could see any sign of F/Lt. SZARZYNSKI but all he could find was a parachute billowing in an oil patch where the aircraft had crashed. A sad loss, for "OSSIE" as we always called him, was a most charming and gifted man — and the model aircraft that he used to make, complete down to the last detail, will long be remembered for the brilliant craftsmanship.

10/08/44

A most terrific series of thunderstorms broke over the 'drome during the night making the aircraft U/S for flying till the evening, so in the afternoon we betook ourselves to the AMERICAN cinema at SOLVE where we saw "THE SONG OF BENADETTE" In the evening two sections, each consisting of one SPITFIRE and one MUSTANG, took off. The C.O with F/Lt. BAGSHAW (No. 260 SQUADRON) patrolled off SPEZIA at 32,000 feet, while F/Lt. D. WRIGHT and his No. 2 (also from 260 SQUADRON) flew North to South from GORGONA ISLAND at 28,000 feet. F/Lt. WRIGHT'S No. 2 got separated and with his R/T U/S he was plotted as a hostile and the others were vectored onto him. What fun for all concerned, and what a disappointment to F/Lt. WRIGHT who tally-hoed in a perfect position for a kill! After the patrol S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, F/Lt. J.E.L. SMITH, F/Lt. D. WRIGHT, F/O. A.R. EVANS and several officers of No. 260 SQUADRON were the guests of S/Ldr.

MUSSON (M.O.R.U. "B") who gave us the interesting information that "Y" Service had overheard two GERMAN fighters who sighted our aircraft yesterday morning in the SPEZIA-GENOA area give each other the comforting information, "It's alright they can't see us, They are flying too high." What a confession for the once proud LUFTWAFFE to make! From PERUGIA — No operational flying today.

11/08/44

A completely uneventful day — four sorties in all. Two at dawn, two at dusk, in conjunction with the MUSTANGS with nothing reported. F/Lt. O.H.E. JONES took aircraft "B" over to PERUGIA today for inspection followed in the afternoon by S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, while P/O. C.P. HACKETT returned from PERUGIA bringing newspapers and a limited supply of mail. From PERUGIA — three of our aircraft out on an armed recce of the railway line between BOLOGNA and FERRARA found a stationary train, consisting of an engine with 20 trucks coupled to it, on the RAVENNA - FERRARA railway, near ALFONSINE and attacked. W/O. F.R. NEWMAN scored a direct hit in the centre of the train cutting it in half but the other bombs fell wide.

12/08/44

The HUN did not appear during the dawn patrol, and though a couple of our aircraft were scrambled in the late afternoon to investigate a high flying aircraft travelling South towards CORSICA, it proved to be friendly. However shortly after 8 o'clock at night, when S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, and W/O. A.T. CONDON were

patrolling off SPEZIA at 30,000 feet "PXREX" reported a bandit some 20 miles South of them on the deck flying North about 45 miles West of LEGHORN. Vectored on a North-Westerly course after a few minutes flying, the C.O. spotted a Ju 88 flying just above the water, way down below, and keeping it on the line the sun was making on the water, he went down, finishing up dead astern. The Ju 88 immediately turned towards GENOA, but the C.O. was unable to reduce the gap to less than 1,000 yards, and having fired all his cannons and experienced red and grey tracer from the HUN rear-gunner, he could do no more, so the Ju 88 escaped crossing the coast over CASSRIA, midway between SPEZIA and GENOA. As our aircraft returned they came across the B.26 again — and its anything but friendly, for the rear-gunner fired the colours of the day followed by a burst — all in one! The C.O. returned from PERUGIA during the afternoon with the news that the rest of the Squadron was coming over, and at 1700 hours GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINCOME, DSO, DFC, and BAR, came over to spend the night with us. A party held in the Mess was attended by WING COMMANDER STILES and several other officers of No. 600 SQUADRON. From PERUGIA — Four aircraft parried out an armed recce of the BOLOGNA - FERRARA area, but finding no transport bombed a bridge ten miles South of FERRARA scoring two direct hits and one near miss on the embankment — all in the face of most intense light flak. The aircraft of F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE DFC was hit and his oxygen bottles exploded! On the way back two six-wheeler trucks going North near PENNABILE were strafed: one was set on fire, the other left smoking and four "JERRIES" that

leapt into a ditch by the side of the road were given a burst. There was another four aircraft show in the afternoon when gun positions eight miles North of FLORENCE were attacked. Our aircraft strafed as they came down to bomb. All bombs fell in the target area, one hitting a house to the North of the target.

13/08/44

A low level patrol off LEGHORN at dawn was uneventful and we had aircraft at Readiness and two aircraft at 15 minutes Availability until 1200 hours when MUSTANGS of No. 260 SQUADRON took over. In the evening while two MUSTANGS of No. 260 SQUADRON patrolled the LEGHORN area, we sent off four aircraft to carry out high level and low level patrols off SPEZIA. And we were rewarded for shortly after 2000 hours P/O. C.D. YOUNG and P/O. D.A. STEVENSON, who were patrolling at 30,000 feet across sun off SPEZIA POINT, saw an aircraft crossing the coast about 30 miles to the North-West and heading South for CORSICA. They at once proceeded to cut it off and after closing and identifying it as an Me 410, they shot it down into the sea about 20 miles West of SPEZIA. Unfortunately P/O. STEVENSON was hit while making his attack and was forced to bale out. However he got into his dinghy and our other SPITFIRES covered him. Meanwhile a launch had set out from PIOMBINO and two P.39's and a BEAUFIGHTER were on their way, and as soon as the P.39's arrived our aircraft returned. P/O. STEVENSON spent the night in his dinghy, while the "JERRY" pilot he had shot down who was only about half-a-mile away treated him to a fine display of

Verrey lights most of the night. From PERUGIA — Four aircraft, along with four aircraft of No. 4 SAAF SQUADRON, operating from FALCONARA L.G., escorted 12 MARAUDERS bombing a bridge at ROVIGO, and that done our aircraft returned to base and there we a no further operational flying.

14/08/44

The search for P/O. STEVENSON continued this morning — four of our aircraft patrolling off SPEZIA, and shortly after 0700 hours he was sighted by F/Lt. O. H. E. JONES and his No. 2, who guided the launch to him. A change of clothes and rum did him a world of good and when he returned in the afternoon after being picked up by the “DOC” in the ambulance at LEGHORN, he looked little the worse for his night’s outing. Six pilots of No. 601 SQUADRON, who had come over to lend a hand with the air-sea rescue operations, returned after breakfasting in the Mess at 1100 hours. Meanwhile there was a gathering of the Squadrons at ROSIGNANO, the remainder of our SQUADRON and the whole of No. 145 SQUADRON. Ground and air parties arrived in the course of the afternoon and early evening and GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINGCOME DSO, DFC, and BAR, who flew over 1800 hours, briefed the combined Squadrons in the Mess telling us about the forthcoming invasion of SOUTHERN FRANCE. Though there was general disappointment that No, 244 WING was not participating in this invasion, having merely to patrol the general area, CUNEO, GENOA, IMPERIA, which lies along the general line of approach of enemy fighters based in the TURIN - MILAN area to the troop

carrier lane. The GROUP CAPTAIN was able to assure us that there was still an important job for us to do in the near future. The usual anti-recce patrols by four of our aircraft were maintained tonight, but both these and a scramble by two of our aircraft at mid-day were quite uneventful. From PERUGIA — Before coming over to ROSIGNANO six of our aircraft bombed over 100 railway trucks in the marshalling yards at MODENA. Apart from one near-miss all other bombs fell in the target area.

15/08/44

Led by S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC, 12 aircraft took off at dawn this morning and patrolled the GENOA - IMPERIA - CUNEA area at 16,000 feet, while at 0800 hours GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINGCOME, DSO, DFC, and BAR, took a similar patrol over the same area. Both these patrols and a further patrol of 12 aircraft led by WING COMMANDER H. DUNDAS, DSO, DFC, and BAR, in the late afternoon were entirely without incident, the HUN making no attempt to interfere with the fleets of transport and gliders moving across to the TROPEZ and FREJUS areas. The usual anti - recce patrols took off in the evening F/Lt. SMITH leading one, F/Lt. BANNER of No. 145 SQUADRON with F/O. FAIR as his No. 2 took the other, and though a bandit was reported in the LEGHORN - PISA area it turned North before we could make contact.

16/08/44

We relieved No. 145 SQUADRON on the GENOA - CUNEA - IMPERIA patrol, and when our 12 aircraft returned at 0930 hours, No. 244 WING had fulfilled its assigned task in the invasion, and

shortly after, a signal came through recalling half of our Squadron and the whole of No. 145 SQUADRON to PERUGIA. The ground party packed with all speed and were on their way by 1400 hours while eight of the pilots after a quick swim down at the beach, returned to PERUGIA shortly after 1700 hours, F/Lt. L.J.

MONTGOMERIE, DFC, remaining behind to take charge of the flight. The following pilots are now at ROSIGNANO;- F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE, DFC, F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE, F/Lt. O.H.E. JONES, F/O. W.R. FAIR, F/O. A.D. TAYLOR, P/O. D.A. STEVENSON, P/O. C.D. YOUNG, P/O. C.F. HACKETT, W/O. A.T. CONDON, and W/O. F.R. NEWMAN. In addition six pilots and four MUSTANGS of No. 260 SQUADRON with the "anti - shufti" work, and tonight when two SPITFIRES and two MUSTANGS were on patrol, the MUSTANGS chased an Me 410 from 30,000 feet down to 2,000 feet where it disappeared in cloud. W/O. R.S. FRY rejoined the Squadron today for his second tour, P/O. F. MOSEDALE also reported for flying duties.

17/08/44

F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE DFC, and W/O. A.T. CONDON carried out the early morning patrol off SPEZIA at 20,000 feet but though there were several bogeys about, nothing hostile was identified and the evening patrol between SPEZIA and GENOA at 4/5,000 feet was entirely uneventful. This afternoon CAPTAIN PIPER, SAAF, brought us over the preliminary report on the interrogation of the HUN pilot that P/O. STEVENSON and P/O. "SID" YOUNG had shot down. It appears that he was a "Cadet" - the equivalent to

our Warrant Officer - and his Wireless Operator who did not survive the baling-out, an L.A.C. Both were comparatively inexperienced for the pilot had no "War Flights" badge. The C.O. returned from PERUGIA in the evening, while W/O. A.T. CONDON and P/O. C.D. YOUNG both made trips to and from PERUGIA in the course of the day bringing back mail and newspapers — both very welcome. F/Lt. J. PREIHS returned to No. 318 SQUADRON (POLISH). Prom PERUGIA — Only one show today, this being carried out by four aircraft on an escort mission to 12 KITTYHAWKS bombing PORTO-MAGGIORE. In the evening an invitation from No. 417 SQUADRON to the cinema show was well attended by officers and men.

18/08/44

Heavy thunderstorms and "dirty" weather generally over the whole area put paid to the early morning patrol and weather was still unsettled when four of our aircraft patrolled in the LEGHORN - SPEZIA area in the evening. S/Ldr. G.J. COX DFC and F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE DFC, flew over to CORSICA today, the former to visit 324 WING, the latter 322 WING. The C.O. returned this evening and shortly after took off for PERUGIA. No. 260 SQUADRON DETACHMENT returned to base this morning so the SPITFIRES will have to cope by themselves. Mess now has electric light. Biscuits and cheese organised for 2100 hours each evening. From PERUGIA — The ADJUTANT and Lt. V.V. BOY went out today to MERCATELLO where they found the remains of the aircraft in which Lt. J.H. HARDING crashed on 15th JUNE. After a talk with

some of the local peasants they established HARDING'S identity and learnt that he had been buried in the MILITARY CEMETERY at PERUGIA. P.O. D.E. FOULGER, Sgt. S.M. SMITH and Sgt. R.S. SELLARS reported today for flying duties. After a very quiet day we were given a bombing mission in the evening. The target was a gun position at a point 15 miles West of SENIGALLIA. The guns were not observed but the area was bombed and strafed, one bomb, one bomb causing a column of white smoke.

19/08/44

From roughly mid-day till 1700 hours we had two aircraft on patrol over the LEGHORN area as Mr. CHURCHILL was visiting the 5th ARMY. As far as the routine patrols went it was by no means an uneventful day for bogeys were about at both dawn and dusk. But though our aircraft were vectored all over the sky and scanned every section of it "with that old-young look" peculiar to fighter pilots, nothing was seen of the HUN though on one occasion in the evening "PYREX" maintained they had vectored us right on to him. However the plotting board and the sky are vastly different media in which to work — so too are counters and aircraft! A commonplace enough observation but one too often forgotten. From PERUGIA — Quite a busy day for us. From 1000 hours to 1120 hours F/Lt. SMITH led four aircraft on "Cab Rank" duties. This is done with a controller, who from his look-out point on the front line, directs the waiting aircraft to the target requiring attention. In this case it was a gun position and a house in a village 10 miles North of PERUGIA that had the honour of being chosen. No guns

were seen but the house had a direct hit, while two other bombs dropped into the village. At 1215 hours four aircraft led by Lt. LAWTON were detailed to bomb a bridge near LAVEZZDA. This they did with deadly effect, scoring one direct hit and three near misses. After bombing Lt. LAWTON and Lt. MANNE strafed a weapon Carrier, carrying 10 bobs, causing it to crash into a house in BAGNACAVALLLO. Lt. LAWTON also strafed a house with an attachment resembling a Rad/R grid. At 1520 hours F/Lt. SMITH again led four aircraft this time to bomb a bridge at PORTO MAGGIORE, bad visibility prevented this so they bombed a bridge at LAVEZZDA scoring one near miss. At 1900 hours Lt. LAWTON led another four aircraft bombing guns at MONDAIO. No guns were observed so they bombed a house near pin point scoring three direct hits.

20/08/44

Bogeys were again active on both dawn and dusk patrols but though PYREX gave bags of vectors and instructions and sent an aircraft across the sky in all directions nothing was seen. Actually today it was very hazy up to 30,000 feet and visibility was restricted throughout. Apart from the eight sorties flown on the anti-recce patrols we put up a section in the afternoon to look for a dinghy reported to be in the sea about 20 miles South-West of SPEZIA point. A couple of P.39's No. 62 WING were seen but there was no sign of a dinghy. P/O. C.D. YOUNG took aircraft "E" to PERUGIA for inspection this morning and returned in aircraft "H". But in other ways this was a red-letter day for we had fresh butter

for breakfast and plenty of tinned peaches and fruit cocktail for lunch!! For these delicacies our thanks go out to Cpl. BROOKES who organised them for us. May we have many more such triumphs. From PERUGIA — at 0730 hours F/Lt. J.E.L. SMITH led five aircraft on an armed recce of the MODERNA- BOLOGNA railway line. Nothing of interest was seen so the aircraft bombed a railway bridge just North of BOLOGNA, scoring one near miss. Intense heavy Ack-Ack was experienced from BOLOGNA and it is believed F/Lt. WRIGHT was hit by this, as shortly afterwards he called up saying that his oil temperature was going off the clock. He was later seen to bale out, and land safely in a valley south of VORGATO. It is reported by an authentic source next day that he was being taken care of and was in good hands. At 1220 hours four aircraft provided an escort for six KITTYHAWKS of No. 3 SAAF SQUADRON, bombing SAN GIOVANI. After leaving the KITTYHAWKS, 20 plus railway trucks were seen in LAVEZZDA marshalling yards but shortage of petrol prevented us giving them any attention. At 1620 hours Lt. LAWTON led four aircraft bombing a railway culvert near SAN GIORGIO. No hits were scored, but direct hits were obtained on a level crossing and nearby road. In Lavezzola marshalling yard many strikes were seen on an engine and also on some waggons nearby.

21/08/44

Shortly after take-off this morning our "anti-shufti" patrol was vectored due North towards SPEZIA but the recce turned away and made off overland without our aircraft seeing him. He was

down again at night too and one of our sections was vectored fairly close to him, but he must have "got wind" of their presence for he started to weave and dive to the North. W/O. A.T. CONDON and F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE then began a long chase crossing the coast at CHIAVARI and continuing inland as far as BOBBIO before breaking off. Once again it was very hazy below 25,000 feet and with visibility down to five or six miles it was hardly surprising that the HUN was not seen. No "grog" in the Mess tonight, our limited supplies have been heavily taxed recently, so F/O. LUNN rather than see us drinking Chlorinated water, brought out a bottle of Whiskey. A very enjoyable evening - ending with F/O. LUNN giving easy lessons in Italian conversation to F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE and F/O. A.D. TAYLOR, both of whom are very keen to learn the "lingo" to improve their social contacts! From PERUGIA — We were on Readiness today from dawn to dusk and except for P/O. D.E. FOULGER and Sgt. S.M. SCETH dropping practice bombs it was a very quiet day. In the evening I/O Sections were briefed by the ADJUTANT on the forthcoming "secret" move.

22/08/44

Two early morning patrols (four sorties in all) were uneventful, but shortly after 0800 hours W/O. A.T. CONDON and his No. 2 were scrambled to intercept a bandit some 20 miles West of SPEZIA coming South East at 30,000 feet. Unfortunately the E/A soon turned North East and then East and after a short patrol between LEGHORN and SPEZIA in case he came back, our aircraft pancaked. F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE and his No. 2 F/O. Fair had to

make an "igri" take off this evening as at 1915 hours a couple of me 109's were reported coming down the coast about 10 miles North of LEGHORN. The soon turned North-East however and made off inland above PISA with our aircraft following some eight to ten miles behind. Some miles North east of PARMA they abandoned the chase and returned. Meanwhile our black section patrolling North from GORGONA ISLAND Had been vectored to the South and South-East but saw nothing. S/Ldr. S.J. COX DFC, arrived back today after a trip to Southern France and a sweep with No. 111 SQUADRON up the RHONE VALLEY to VALENCE! F/Lt. O.H.E. JONES who took the old aircraft "G" for a 240 hour inspection yesterday returned today with the new "G", while F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE after negotiations with AMGOT officials in LEGHORN returned with a piano in the back of No. 8 (15cwt.) a useful acquisition, provided we can find someone to tune it and play it! Yes Mr. Fair, I said "Play it" and I mean play it! Sgt. R.S. SELLARS arrived tonight from PERUGIA by road. PERUGIA — Squadron packed up and marshalled at 2000 hours for a "Hush-Hush" move, and moved off at 0300 hours on the 23rd. First light saw four aircraft airborne on weather recces, flying in two sections of two's, one section inspected the RIMINI - FERRAR - BOLOGNA area, while the other visited the area to the west of FLORENCE - BOLOGNA. F/Lt. O.H.E. JONES who was leading the second section strafed a small car and had the satisfaction of seeing two 'bods" hurl out. In the late afternoon six aircraft after bombing the bridge 15 miles South-West of FERRAR split up for strafing forays, with the following results, one three ton lorry damaged, one three

toner a flamer, strikes on other M.T., strikes on a small bus, one staff-car hit and ditched, one staff-car and one M.T. flamer.

23/08/44

Recce kites again made abortive attempts to come down the coast early this morning, getting as far down as 12 miles South East of SPEZIA before turning North followed by S/Ldr. G.J.COX, DFC. and F/Lt. L.J.MONTGOMERIE, DFC, who chased them, without however seeing them, to the promontory just South-East of GENOA before breaking off. A second section that had been scrambled climbed to 23,000 feet before being told to resume patrol off SPEZIA at 30,000 feet. Both evening patrols were without incident, the weather probably being much too hazy to make it worth while for the HUN to come down. Lt. M.H.D. LAWTON came over from PERUGIA in the morning with an urgent message from the GROUP CAPTAIN for the COMMANDING OFFICER to return at once. P/O. F. MOSEDALE flew over aircraft "D" this evening and is remaining here with the flight. Much of today F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE has been busy tuning his new toy and is making a remarkably good job of it in spite of very indifferent tools. Our thanks go to F/O. W.R. FAIR for putting a carton of "Sweet Caps" at the disposal of the Mess. Damn good of you Tubby! Squadron arrived at LORETO on the ADRIATIC COAST at mid-day and established the camp site the same afternoon, in the South-West corner of the 'drome. From PERUGIA — The small rear party that had been left at PERUGIA had quite a busy day. At 1000 hours F/Lt J.E.L SMITH led six

aircraft bombing a railway bridge at a point East of BOLGNA scoring one direct hit on the bridge and one on the railway track.

COMMANDING OFFICER VENTER

24/08/44

W/O. F.R. NEWMAN and P/O. C.F. HACKETT were vectored on to a couple of Me 109's on the early morning patrol but the 109's which were about 3,000 foot below dived away and were lost in the thick haze before they could be caught. Forty-five minutes later when W/O. A.T. CONDON'S section was on patrol 109's were reported in the LEGHORN area but nothing was seen of them. However at night F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE, DFC, and F/O. A.T. TAYLOR returning from patrol off SPEZZIA were vectored on to a couple of 109's, one of which attacked by F/O. TAYLOR from almost head-on and slightly above and hit in the cockpit, went spinning down vertically from 10,000 feet. F/O. TAYLOR followed it down to between 2/3,000 feet before pulling out and did not actually see the HUN hit the sea. But there was enough disturbance in the water to assume that it had gone in. Unfortunately we can do no more than claim one Me 109 probably destroyed. Good show Al! Your first sight of the HUN too! Unfortunately our delight over this success was marred by news that Sgt. R.S. SELLARS had crashed in a ploughed field at CECINA MARINA while on a training flight receiving severe injuries. The cause of the accident is a mystery. A very sultry day today and attempting to slake our thirst tonight in the Mess with some newly acquired vino-Bianca we found it 99% water and 1% vino! With nothing else to drink it was early to bed.

MAJOR P.W. VENTER took over Command of the Squadron today vice SQUADRON LEADER G.J. COX, DFC, (O.T.E.). While everyone at LOBETO was busy attending to camp duties the rear party at PERUGIA were keeping the flag flying, Sgt. W. TAYLOR and his staff of four kept up the usual high standard of serviceability, while Cpl. A.C. PENNY and three stalwarts whipped up the bombs and ammo, with amazing alacrity. At 0830 hours six aircraft, led by Lt. M.H.D. LAWTON were airborne on another bombing mission. The target this time was railway lines South of SAN GIORGIO.

Although no direct hits can be recorded two near misses are believed to have cut the line. On a low level strafing attack East of BOLOGNA out of a total of four M.T. found we claim one flamer, one smoker and two hit without results observed. At 1545 hours six aircraft led by F/Lt. J.E.L. SMITH scored one near miss on a railway culvert North of SAN GIORGIO. After bombing they strafed the RAVENNA area, scoring one heavy M.T., one motor-cycle, two cars and a three-tonner as flamers, and a three-tonner a smoker.

LORETO - DETACHMENT AT ROSIGNANO

25/08/44

F/Lt. MONTGOMERIE DFC, and F/O. A.D. TAYLOR took off on the early morning patrol and almost at once were vectored on to two Me 109's between SPEZIA and PISA. The 109's a few hundred feet above did not see us and were cunningly stalked until as they turned out to sea, they noticed the SPITFIRES below. The No. 1 at once dived away but the No. 2 after a shallower dive, levelled out, obviously thinking he had shaken us off. Unfortunately for him we

positioned ourselves slightly below and as he crossed the coast East of SPEZIA, F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE, DFC. closing to 200 yards, gave him a three to four second burst and sent him spiralling down into the deck. This is the fourth Me 109 F/Lt. MONTGOMERIE has destroyed since joining us and the Squadron score now stands at 316½ destroyed — one more victim and we shall be the second top scoring Squadron in the R.A.F. Of the six other operational sorties carried out today all were uneventful. Sgt. R.S. SELLARS died in No. 8 U.S.A. EVACUATION HOSPITAL during the early hours of this morning. F/O. W.R. FAIR flew aircraft "H" over to the other side so maintenance could work on it, and after some difficulty found the Squadron at LORETO. S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC, flew over in the afternoon from PERUGIA, collected his remaining belongings, wished us goodbye and was away again just after 1830 hours – giving us one of his most spectacular "beat-ups" before setting course. LORETO — The PRIME MINISTER landed here this afternoon in a D.C. 3 - preparing a short address to the crowd that gathered round his plane with the words "God bless you all." F/O. D.A.W. HASTINGS, Equipment Officer arrived. Today the aircraft operated from FALCONARA L.G. We were detailed to be airborne on an escort mission to 12 BALTIMORES at 0815 hours, but at 0800 hours the aircraft was found not to have been re-fuelled. We managed to get off at 0830 hours, and found the BALTIMORES after they had bombed heading South-West for AREZZO. Again in the afternoon five aircraft provided escort to five BALTIMORES bombing the marshalling yards at FORLI. Just before dark the aircraft landed at LORETO.

26/08/44

Bandits were about this morning when W/O. A.T. CONDON and F/Lt. O.H.E. JONES were airborne on the dawn patrol and though we were vectored into their immediate vicinity, "Y" service reported later that the HUNS saw us first and dived away before they were spotted. This evening F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE, DFC, was very seriously injured when his engine cut and he crashed in the circuit. He had just returned from an exciting patrol with F/O. A.D. TAYLOR in the course of which they had chased an Me. 410 - and held it in the dive!! - only to lose it just as they were getting within range, for as it flew inland over SPEZIA Harbour at 1,000 feet, the guns threw up an intense barrage of light 'flak' and they were forced to turn away. Three bottles of beer for each officer and airman were available tonight as a result of efforts of F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE who went down to PIOMBINO today and managed to extract N.A.A.P.I. supplies from the store there. LORETO — Another quiet day again today - only one show. This was in the early evening, when MAJOR P.W. VENTER started his tour of operations with a six aircraft show. On an armed recce of the CESENA - FORLI - FAINZO - IMOLA road, two trucks were bombed but although no direct hits were scored one near miss must have worried the drivers somewhat. This morning the "Gallant- EIGHTH ARMY opened an attack on the GOTHIC LINE, and the first reports are exceedingly good, progress being made by the POLISH TROOPS on the coastal sector.

27/08/44

F/Lt. L.J. MONTGOMERIE, DFC, died early this morning from his injuries and was buried at the War Cemetery at FALLONICA in the afternoon. A Roman Catholic Chaplain officiated and the pall bearers were P/O. C.D. YOUNG, W/O A.T. CONDON, F/O. W.R. FAIR, W/O. F.R. NEWMAN, F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE and F/O. A.R. EVANS. A Detachment of the Squadron, under the command of F/O. J. LUNN, was also present to pay their last respects to a very fine man. "MONTY" was not merely an exceptionally capable fighter pilot, he was a man of the highest character, vital, modest, chivalrous and level-headed, winning the respect, admiration and affection of all with whom he worked. It was indeed a privilege to have known him. Ten operational sorties of which four were scrambles were flown today, and though the HUM was airborne in the morning he turned away North before our patrols could make contact, while in the evening the presence of much haze and cloud from 15,000 to 30,000 feet obviously discouraged him for no plots appeared. MAJOR P.W. VENTER arrived from LORETO in the evening and was formally introduced to the Squadron. To celebrate his visit a party developed in the Mess, and though it was a little slow warming up it eventually really got going and music and song went on far into the night. Highlights of the evening were a "Maori War Dance" by W/O. A.T.CONDON, "Maori Farewell to the Dead" sung by P/O. "SID" YOUNG, and some excellent work on the "keys" by W/O. G. SANDERSON. It was into this atmosphere that the new EQUIPMENT OFFICER, F/O. D.A.W. HASTINGS, who arrived at ROSIGNANO this afternoon was flung. From LORETO — Only two

bombing shows today, one at lunch-time and the other in the early evening. 1205 hours saw' six aircraft led by F/Lt. J.E.L. SMITH on the prowl for 20 plus M.T. reported a few miles South of PESARO. As usual they had disappeared, but after a careful search two three-tonners were found parked together a few miles East of PESARO. Sgt. S.M. SMITH, who was on his second operational mission, earned the name "killie", by planting his bomb on the road five yards from the M.T. — "finito" M.T. On the evening show we provided six aircraft of the total of 31 aircraft from the Wing detailed to bomb the road and village of MONTECCHIO. Our contribution was four direct hits on the road.

28/08/44

W/O. F.R. NEWMAN and P/O. C.F. HACKETT intercepted four Me.109's flying South, crossing the coast to the East of SPEZIA not long after take-off this morning. Three of them made off, but the other after making a pass at P/O. HACKETT made off in a steep dive followed by W/O. NEWMAN who after a stern chase shot it down at 2,000 feet and had the satisfaction of seeing it crash into the mountains East of VIA REGGIO and burst into flames. The "JERRY" pilot baled out at 1,500 feet and probably got away with it for his 'chute opened. Well done Frank! Your last operational trip too. Meanwhile F/Lt. O.H.E. JONES and his No. 2 who had been scrambled in case the others needed assistance were quickly told to patrol off SPEZIA and after a "shufti" around FLORENCE in search of a bogey they returned to base. Evening patrols — four sorties — were entirely without incident. MAJOR P.W. VENTER

returned to LORETO this evening, while Lt. E. MANNE arrived at ROSIGNANO from there with some NAAFI supplies for us. LORETO;- P/O. J.S. OGG and W/O. B.H. GREENWOOD reported today for flying duties. We only had one show today, this was at 1350 hours when W/Commander. H. DUNDAS, led six aircraft on a bombing mission of a Radar Station about five miles West of CERVIA. The target was a house, and although quite small in size, we managed to score two direct hits.

29/08/44

On the dawn patrol this morning F/O. A.T. TAYLOR and F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE intercepted a couple of Me. 109's carrying belly tanks. The enemy aircraft were about 2,000 feet below our aircraft which were flying at 20,000 ft. a few miles South of SPEZIA. Unfortunately F/O. A.T. TAYLOR overshot in his attack and the Me. Made of in a shallower dive and was lost inland in the cloud. F/Lt. E.R.H. WHITE made several attacks on the other enemy aircraft but though he saw strikes, no vital damage can have been done as it was able to make good its escape. In the evening two sections patrolled the SPEZIA - GORGONA area but though various vectors were received the plot faded and the aircraft pancaked without seeing anything. F/Lt. J.E.L SMITH now O.T.E. arrived from LORETO this afternoon and Lt. E. MANNE returned there after dinner. Tonight a party was held in the Mess to celebrate the appointment of W/O. A.T. CONDON and W/O. F.R. NEWMAN to commissioned rank. We offer them both our hearty congratulations and best wishes for the future. LORETO - F/Lt. G.R.C. SARLL

arrived on posting from No. 145 SQUADRON as FLIGHT COMMANDER. At lunch time MAJOR P.W. VENTER led six aircraft on a bombing show. The target was a defended position just over the bomb-line East of PESARO. Although nothing could be seen we placed, two bombs in the target area while three more were near misses on a nearby farmhouse. P/O. D E. FOULGER strafed a house and five "bods" ran towards a ditch, one of them made it, but the other four got in the way of the cannon fire F/Lt. J.E.L. SMITH who was following him. In the afternoon along with 12 aircraft of No. 145 SQUADRQN we were detailed to escort 24 MARAUDERS who were bombing a bridge North of VENICE, but after circling base the MARAUDERS disappeared and were not seen again. The COMMANDING OFFICER, MAJOR P.W. VENTER, took out three aircraft on a sweep North of VENICE but it turned out very uninteresting.

30/08/44

Four missions eight sorties in all were flown today, but the HUN did not venture forth and all patrols were uneventful. F/Lt. O.H.E. JONES was out for 80 minutes in the morning covering an air-sea rescue launch and a WALRUS that were searching a mile off shore from CECINA for a member of a crew of a BOSTON which had gone in. A dinghy was located and the WALRUS dropped smoke flares. The ADJUTANT flew over today in the AUSTER piloted by F/O. R.T. HUTCHINSON and decided to stay the night "owing to pressure of work." We rather suspect though that it was the attraction of goose for dinner that influenced him. From

LORETO — 10.15 hours saw four aircraft along with eight aircraft of No.145 SQUADRON and four aircraft of No. 185 SQUADRON airborne with intentions of escorting MARAUDERS on another bombing mission. This time the MARAUDERS failed to appear at all and again MAJOR P.W. VENTER carried out an uneventful sweep of the target area. While these four aircraft "were choosing our billets in VENICE" we were called upon to provide 2 aircraft to make a composite six bombing a gun position in the battle area, but as we were about to attack, the Controller gave orders to Jettison the bombs. Lt. M.H.D. LAWTON and F/Lt. G.R.G. SARLL then paid a visit to the beach near CATTOLICA where they found a number of HUNS having "fun" in the sea. To show no ill feeling, the aircraft strafed them, poor souls! They should not have been there anyway! At 16:35 six aircraft led by the C.O. set out to bomb a bridge near FORLI but out of the six bombs dropped only three exploded - these all being wides.

31/08/44

From ROSIGNANO - six sorties were flown today on anti-recce patrols but the HUN did not come down the coast in the evening he quickly turned North when we were vectored onto him but we were unable to close the 12 mile gap that separated us. The detachment flew a total of 265 operational sorties — 364 hours 20 minutes; and 95 non-operational sorties - 63 hours 20 minutes. Enemy aircraft destroyed three (one Me. 410 and two Me. 109's), probably destroyed one (Me. 109) during the month. From LORETO — For a change we had an early show - this was carried

out by six aircraft led by MAJOR P.W. VENTER. The target was gun positions in the PESARO battle area. No guns were actually observed, but emplacements were. Five bombs straddled the area, one of which caused a column of smoke (Black) to rise to a considerable height. In the afternoon Lt. M.H.D. LAWTON and five others were on "Cab Rank" duties. Six "Panzer Kampf Wagen Mk. V's" were seen moving South towards the battle area and although they were such a wonderful target, we were ordered not to bomb. Our subsequent target were gun positions in the TOMBA area. Again no guns were observed but all bombs fell n the target area. The Squadron was released shortly after dinner. A cinema show at Wing was well attended by both officers and men. A total of 309 operational hours comprising 214 sorties was flown this month; in addition there were 61 non-operational trips totalling 38 hours 35 minutes. Total flying for the Squadron for the month: Operational hours 673, operational sorties 479: non-operational hours 102, non operational sorties 156. Squadron scoreboard now reads: Destroyed 317½, Probably Destroyed 107, Damaged 184.

01/09/44

10 Sorties today - 6 on Rover Jimmy in course of which 6 aircraft led by F/Lt. G. SARLL bombed three 88mm guns in circular gun pits near CORIANO and left target obscured by clouds of dust and smoke - 4 on an Armed Recce of roads and railways in the RIMINI - FORLI — MEREATO area. A bridge near CESANO was severely damaged by three direct hits, a 15cwt on the road about 4 miles NORTH EAST of the town was strafed and some twenty barges at

GATEO were damaged. 8 aircraft flew Anti Recce Patrols today; the first light patrols were uneventful but in the evening P/O. C. YOUNG (NZ) and F/O. G MEAGHER (NZ) patrolling off SPEZIA at 30,000 ft. saw an E/A flying NORTH EAST at 27,000 ft. but were unable to close.

02/09/44

Our only trip of the day was when 4 of our aircraft along with 4 of 145 SQUADRON were on "CAB RANK" duty and directed by ROVER JIMMY to bomb roads and trees in the area, bombed cross roads at MONTESCUDO scoring three direct hits - one in the middle of the cross roads one on the NORTH road and one on a house on the NORTH road. After an uneventful first light patrol by 2 aircraft we were released at 08:00 hours from all operational commitments and the detachment packed up ready to move off next morning.

03/09/44

After 4 aircraft despatched at first light on an Armed Recce of SAN MARINO - FORLI - RAVENNA - had been ordered almost immediately after take off to jettison their bombs and pancake, we were not called upon till the afternoon when a couple of attacks by 10 aircraft in all were made on SAVIGNANO village. Detachment ready to move but as LORETO airfield was U/S, we were told to wait further instructions, so spent the rest of the day lounging in the sun. After supper the 'Doc' gave a most interesting talk on V.D.

LORETO ITALY

04/09/44

On two occasions today 2 of our aircraft were scrambled, but each time Bogeys proved unfriendly. At last light patrol 30 miles NORTH of ANCONA and 7 miles out to sea by Major. P. VENTER (SAAF) and Lt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) was uneventful - thought they heard aircraft of 241 SQUADRO report that they had shot down an Me. 109. After carrying out a short Battle Area patrol, the aircraft landed at FANO. Meanwhile the remaining aircraft had flown up from Loreto where they joined the 7 aircraft of the ROSIGNANO DETATCHMENT which had flown over in the afternoon. Road party led by F/O. A. EVANS - the Intelligence Officer - set off for FANO at 12:30 hours - travelling via VOLTERRA and SIENA and spent the night near AREZZO.

05/09/44

F/Lt. G. SARLL led 4 aircraft on the first show of the day but unable to find reported gun positions at VITO DI RIMINI attacked six houses in the village. "Cab Rank" duties kept us busy for the rest of the day and a very successful attack was made on gun pits at MULAZZANO while a house and several M.T. Parked by it about 2 miles SOUTH WEST of RIMINI were smashed. The DETACHMENT continued their "Coast to Coast" journey leaving AREZZO in the early hours and travelling via PERUGIA - FOLIGNO

- FABRIANO and spending the night a few miles SOUTH of SENIGALLIA.

06/09/44

We were very busy today flying altogether 34 sorties - in the course of which we made three attacks on different gun positions and three attacks on road bridges. Of the bridges attacked two near misses were scored on one at SAVIO, 2 direct hits, one at the NORTH end, the other at the SOUTH end of one over the RIVER MARECCHIA (it was rather galling for the pilots to see an ambulance shortly afterwards making its way across the dry river bed) and 1 direct hit and 1 near miss on a bridge over the same river on the NORTH WESTERN outskirts of RIMINI. Two coastal gun pits 3 miles NORTH EAST of SAVIGNANO were well covered - 2 bombs landing on the edge of pits while a couple of probable gun pits near a house at SASSO FELTRIO were hit and the house demolished. In the course of the day too a road junction 2 miles SOUTH EAST of POGGI BERNI was hit, a lorry blown up on the CERVIA - RAVENNA road and nine 40mm guns four miles west of POGGI BERNI strafed. F/O. G. MEAGHER (NZ) who went off to look for strafing targets NORTH of RIMINI on the first show of the day was not seen again and what happened to him remains a complete mystery. The road party from ROSIGNANO arrived early this morning and once again the Squadron is united.

07/09/44

Only one show today when 6 aircraft led by F/Lt. G. SARLL went out on a ROVER JIMMY but finding all targets obscured by heavy

cloud, they jettisoned their bombs in the sea SOUTH EAST of RIMINI.

08/09/44 and 09/09/44

No operational flying. 'Drome U/S owing to heavy rain.

10/09/44

The airfield was not serviceable until 1330 hours and shortly after 6 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. P. VENTER (SAAF), went off on a ROVER JIMMY. They were directed onto some guns near the SAN MARINO border. 6 small gun-pits and one largish one were located on the hillside about 200 yards from the border and a couple of bombs dropped right amongst them. Later Armed recce of the RIMINI - BOLOGNA -MODENA area carried out by 5 aircraft led by Lt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) was extremely successful for some coaches and five electric engines seen on the railway running SOUTH WEST from MODENA were bombed and strafed. The coaches were smashed, 3 of the engines left smoking and the other two hit.

11/09/44

We were not called upon till shortly after 1200 hours but between then and last light 20 sorties were flown - 6 close support and 14 on railway bridges in the enemy rear. The C.O. led the first two shows, in the former ROVER JIMMY directed them onto troop positions in MONTE ALTEVELO and three direct hits were scored on a small group of houses there while a '3 Tonner' parked in a bay cut into the side of the road near MONTE GRIMANO was strafed.

On the second mission finding their target – a railway bridge midway on the main line from CERVIA to RAVENNA – already destroyed, they attacked another bridge about 2 miles further NORTH up the line scoring a couple of direct hits and 2 near misses. The last show of the day was something of a shambles. F/Lt. SARLL was hit in the port flap in his bombing dive and had great difficulty in controlling his kite, and after landing 1 bomb slap in the centre of the target – a railway bridge about 8 miles to the NORTH of IMOLA – the other aircraft located 8 tanks moving SOUTH about 4 miles N.W. of CERVIA. F/Lt. JONES went down to strafe and left one in flames – meanwhile an intense barrage of heavy flak opened up on the others who were flying at 7,000 feet. Lt. M. LAWTON'S (SAAF) machine was hit and he had to bale out 3/8 miles EAST of RIMINI. He got into his dinghy O.K. and a Walrus and 2 H.S.L.'s covered by a Beaufighter of No. 600 Squadron were out on their way almost at once. F/O. D. FOULGER had the unique experience of being chased down the runway by his 500 lb. bomb which exploded near the Central Tower and riddled the No. 417 Squadron Fire Tender but without harming FOULGER, while F/Lt. O. JONES and W/O. B. GREENWOOD unable to land here, went of to CHIARAVALLE whence they hitched hiked back to FANO. We congratulate Lt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) on his promotion today to the rank of CAPTAIN. Sgt. J. BURROW and Sgt. N. DIXON reported to the Squadron for flying duties today.

12/09/44

F/Lt. O. JONES and W/O. B. GREENWOOD together with a refuelling party were up at the crack of dawn and 'on their bicycles' to CHIARVALLE where they collected their abandoned aircraft and flew them back here. Our commitments today were not heavy - and armed recce by 6 aircraft at lunch time over the RIMINI- MODENA- FERRARA area found no sign of enemy movement so they bombed a station about 3 miles N.E. of MOLINELLA on the BOLOGNA - ARGENTA line scoring 1 direct hit, while 6 aircraft led by F/Lt. G. SARLL in the evening on a ROVER PADDY bombed MONTE COLOMBO, an enemy strong-point, 4 bombs falling in a cluster in the Southern end of the town. Capt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) re-appeared at lunch today none the worse for his exciting experience which he shall describe in his own words; "As I hit the water I released my 'chute, wriggled free and inflated my dinghy. After about 20 minutes I saw the Walrus, and after it had landed I paddled to the flame float it had dropped and waved it about to indicate my position. I had no trouble in boarding the Walrus through the back hatch. The machine had to taxi back as it could not take off. About 45 minutes later it was mistaken for a German 'E' Boat and was fired upon by two Royal Navy M.T.B.'s. The three of us dived into the water and swam away with the aid of our MAE WESTS. 15 Minutes later we were picked up by the M.T.B.'s. At about 0100 hours in the morning one M.T.B. hit a mine and had to be towed back!! I was then taken on board another boat and taken to ANCONA" The 'DOC' has prescribed leave at SORRENTO.

13/09/44

In our 23 sorties today we had a variety of targets ranging from rocket guns firing from MONTESCUDO and the valley to the N.E. to a couple of railway bridges - 1 of which spanning the river midway between BOLOGNA and IMOLA received a very near miss - the other, 4 miles S.E. of ARGENTA was missed - and troops and light guns in the village of MONTE COLOMBO which were well and truly pestered. Innumerable strafing runs carried out in the course of these missions forced enemy troops to keep their heads well down as well as depriving them of one of the all too few M.T. vehicles which was clobbered on the main coast road about 7 miles N.W. of RIMINI. A search for a submarine reported off LORETO was a failure. Unfortunately today we lost Lt. E. MANNE (SAAF) who baled out successfully about 4 miles SOUTH of FAENZA after being hit by flak.

14/09/44

The large concentrations of M.T. variously reported this morning in the ARGENTA area and again on the RIMINI- SAN MARINO road proved to be non-existent but we were able to find suitable targets in the shape of a road bridge 4 miles S.E. of ARGENTA - which received 2 direct hits and 1 near miss - and gun positions a mile N.W. of CERIANO where 1 bomb fell slap into a gun pit! Later in the day F/Lt. G. SARLL and WING COMMANDER DUNDAS, DFC. Led a '6' and an '8' in attacks on gun positions 5 to 7 miles S.W. of RIMINI - results of which can in no way have improved enemy morale. The light flak gunners were extremely active about the

luncheon hour and Sgt. 'GINGER' SMITH'S machine was severely damaged but he managed to make a successful emergency landing at base. This evening a most successful party was held in the Mess and we were honoured by the presence of the GROUP CAPTAIN, G/C. B. KINGCOME, DSO, DFC and BAR, - the WING COMMANDER as well as the Commanding Officers of No. 145 SQUADRON, No. 601 SQUADRON, and No. 417 SQUADRON (RCAF). For the success of the evening most of our thanks must go to the ADJUTANT, F/Lt. L. TRAVIS, who provided a remarkable selection of wines, spirits and liqueurs for the occasion.

15/09/44

Close support work kept us very busy today and accounted for the 25 sorties that were flown targets ranged from SERRAVALLE - where a large building in the centre of the town, in the main square - was demolished, to tanks SOUTH of RIMINI, M.T vehicles parked in a 'wadi' and in the mouth of a tunnel near DOMAGNANO, and troop concentrations near ASAROLO - on each mission - led either by the C.O. or F/Lt. G. SARLL - results were uniformly good.

16/09/44

The enemy strong point of SERRAVALLE came in for attention again today when 4 direct hits were scored on it while 10 gun pits across the MORANO RIVER about a mile to the NORTH of CORTIANINO were well and truly plastered - two of the pits receiving 3 direct hits! No guns could be located in reported sites

near TREBBIO but the area where they were supposed to be was well covered. Today F/Lt. L.SMITH, P/O. C. YOUNG (NZ), P/O. A. CONDON (NZ) and P/O. F. NEWMAN left us on posting to 38 P.D.C. and we wish them every success in the future. With the departure of MIKE CONDON and CED YOUNG we lose our last two NEW ZEALANDERS, but we hope that before long we shall get some more men from islands 'down under' - we can't have too many of them.

17/09/44

Gun positions near CERIANO and SAN ANDREA, machine gun nests hidden away among trees and bushes in the garden of a house near SAN LORENZO, a defended house and troop positions on the FOTUNATO RIDGE where the enemy is stubbornly fighting to hold up our advance to the plains were the targets for today. 34 sorties were flown and very satisfactory results - that is satisfactory to us - not to the enemy - were obtained.

18/09/44

Machine gun nests on the NORTHERN side of the FORTUNATO RIDGE were heavily bombed and strafed by relays of aircraft of 244 WING from first light this morning and by 0740 hours we had sent out 11 sorties to do our share of the pounding. Later in the morning F/O. A.D. TAYLOR (CAN) led a successful attack on BRUCIATO while F/Lt. G. SARLL and the C.O. Maj. P. VENTER (SAAF), attacked field guns on the SOUTHERN bank of the RIVER MARECCHIA about 3 miles EAST of RIMINI and 2 gun pits near a

house 1½ miles N.E. of CERVIO where the C.O. scored 1 very near miss on a gun.

19/09/44

Altogether 18 of our aircraft had attacked VERUCCHIO by noon today! It was very close support work for our troops were near the SOUTHERN outskirts of the town and we were asked to be careful not to undershoot but to bomb the centre and NORTH of the town. These instructions were carried out to the letter and VERUCCHIO took a good pasting. We did not come off unscathed though for F/O. A.D. TAYLOR (CAN) who led the first attack was hit by flak but managed to bale out successfully behind our own lines where we landed unhurt in a ploughed field just NORTH of the RIVER CONSA – about 2 miles due EAST of MONTE COLOMBO, while F/O. D. FOULGER whose port tyre was punctured by flak pranged on landing. 'Al' TAYLOR was back by lunch time, thanks to the R.A.F. Regiment. After an attack on mortar positions in a field alongside two houses in SAN MARINO our last show of the day led by the C.O. was the bombing and strafing of enemy infantry whose positions on the side of a hill near BRUCINTO were identified for us by the army who fired white smoke shells. 'TUBBY FAIR (CAN) had the unusual experience today of being fired upon by a couple of 'outriders' who were escorting a 4-wheeled coach drawn by two horses! And then there was more fun than that!!

20/09/44

We were congratulated twice today by ROVER PADDY on the excellence of our bombing results – first when we attacked troop

concentrations in fields in and around the cross roads at CATORSAM, second when we obtained a good coverage of enemy tank concentrations near ACQUAVIVA in SAN MARINO STATE. An attack on gun positions a mile to the NORTH of VERUCCHIO resulted in two direct hits on gun pits and one near miss, but the road bridge over the RIVER RENO at MADDELENA del BOSCO remained intact after 8 of our aircraft had slung their bombs at it. However W/O. R. FRY and Sgt. 'GINGER' SMITH got an M.T flamer near CASOL BORSETTI - so the trip was not entirely worthless. Throughout the day weather conditions grew a steadily worse with a great belt of rain to the N.W of the Battle Area gradually extending N.E. This storm broke over us in the evening and once again the Mess leaked like a sieve and a swirling stream ran the whole length of the tents.

21/09/44 and 22/09/44

No flying - 'drome U/S - still we made up for it on the 21st by having a magnificent banquet in the course of which each one of us consumed a cold chicken apiece and a liberal supply of excellent wine! The Sergeant pilots joined us later and a convivial evening followed. Out thanks go to the Adjutant - F/Lt. L. TRAVIS - for providing the food and the liquor. F/Sgts E. SMITH and H. HOOLIHAN, both AUSTRALIANS and also Sgts. T. MUTCH and DOYLE joined the squadron for flying duties.

23/09/44

Not until late in the afternoon was flying possible, then F/O. A.D. TAYLOR (CAN) led a 'six' in an attack on 4 to 6 gun pits in a field

about 4 miles S.W. of CESENATICO. 2 bombs fell in the field and there was one near miss - afterwards roads NORTH WEST to FORLI were reced but with the weather closing in, no movement was observed. In the evening our aircraft taxied to the P.S.P. strip close to the runway to enable us to operate regardless of weather conditions.

24/09/44

Two aircraft were at cockpit readiness from first light and shortly before 0800 hours they were scrambled after a Ju. 88 approaching RIMINI from the NORTH WEST at 20,000 ft. But starting off 18 miles behind, our aircraft had little chance and after chasing NORTH as far as VENICE they were recalled. The Squadron was at 30 minutes from 0930 hours and an afternoon show was recalled immediately after take-off. Shortly after we were released.

25/09/44

40 sorties were flown today against a variety of targets. A level crossing at SAN PIETRO on the main BOLOGNA - FERRARA line was attacked by successive waves of 6 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. P. VENTER (SAAF) - and Capt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) and 1 direct hit was scored on the crossing while two fell on the line to the NORTH and two more demolished houses built close to the line. The targets today were gun positions and mortars near SAVIGNANO and troops 2 miles NORTH of GATTEO while our bombing of a tank concentration in a wood near LA TORRE and of troops and guns in GIOVANNI DI GALILEA - a little village on the crest of a hill - was extremely accurate and won high praise from

the Army - for not only did it prevent an enemy counter attack but it also enabled our troops to walk unopposed into GIOVANNI. 4 sorties were also flown in an unsuccessful air - sea - rescue search for a 239 WING pilot. In the evening we entertained three of the artists from the E.N.S.A. show 'EVE ON LEAVE' and shortly before they arrived we learnt with delight that Lt. ERIC MANNE (SAAF) who was shot down on the 13th had succeeded in making his way back to our lines.

26/09/44

During the luncheon hour 12 of our aircraft were busy breaking up enemy rail transport, and very successful they were too - riddling near BOLOGNA a stationary engine and effectively strafing the 12 attached trucks - eight of which were carrying tanks and M.T. One of the trucks seemed to be on fire as our aircraft flew away. A 100+ goods trucks, dispersed in groups of 20 or 30, on the line NORTH EAST of FERRARA were also bombed and strafed and fires left burning in three of the groups. In the afternoon three concentrated attacks - 14 sorties in all - were made on mortar positions between SAVIGNANO and ST. MAURO - and heavy enemy shelling was effectively silenced. Vicious flak came from a 40mm gun post camouflaged as a hay stack in the middle of a field but little damage was done and all our aircraft returned safely.

27/09/44

12 aircraft briefed to take off at first light found the shows postponed because of weather conditions but at 06.20 hrs two 'sixes' led by Capt. M. LAWTON (SAAF) and F/O. A. D. TAYLOR

(CAN) took off on an armed recce of HIGHWAY 9 to BOLOGNA - N.E. to FERRARA - then to RAVENNA - and SOUTH down the coast to base. 4 to 6 gun pits in a field ½ mile N.E. the NORTH of VILLALTA and 2 x 88mm gun pits about 1 mile N.E. of GAMBETTOLA were effectively bombed and there was little enemy movement on the roads and apart from the damage of 2 M.T. just to the WEST of CESENA there was nothing to report. A hilarious party was held in the Mess this evening. Guests of honour were the E.N.S.A. artistes from the show "EVE ON LEAVE"

28/09/44

Two aircraft were at cockpit readiness and two at 15 minutes from first light until 0900 hrs when the whole squadron was put on 30 minutes available. At 1030 hrs F/Lt. O. JONES and his No. 2 carried out a weather recce - and with the cloud generally down to 1,000 feet and heavy rain storms, he found the HUN was seizing the opportunity, for the roads were full of M.T. After destroying a petrol truck and severely damaging 3 M.T. in the area SOUTH EAST of FERRARA he attacked a long goods train 5 (miles) S. E. of BOLOGNA and blew up a locomotive with a quick burst. Light flak gunners were right on target and "JONAH" came back with a hole in the starboard mainplane which severed his aileron controls. Another weather recce in the afternoon found cloud down to deck level in the battle area, and that completed our flying today.

29/09/44

No operational flying took place owing to low cloud and rain but we had two aircraft at cockpit readiness from first light until 0900 hrs, when the squadron was put on 30 minutes availability.

30/09/44

F/Lt. O JONES was again in great form today when after a First Light weather recce to the NORTH and NORTH EAST he attacked and blew up a locomotive with steam up about 5 miles S.E. of IMOLA and left 1 M.T flaming 5 miles N.W, of CESENA! The main road over the RIVER SAVIO came in for a good deal of attention during the morning and six of our aircraft in relays of 2 at 10 minute intervals scored two near misses. Best individual effort was that of F/O. C. HACKETT whose bombs demolished a pontoon bridge 50 yards to the EAST. Gun positions 4 miles N.E. of CESENA were also well covered on a later show, but two scrambles in the course of the day were abortive. During the month 454 Operational sorties were flown with a total of 490 hours 40 minutes. In addition 51 non-operational hours with flying hours of 23.50 were also recorded. On bombing sorties we dropped 415 x 500 lbs.

FANO ITALY

01/10/44

Attacks today on the very heavily defended bridges over the SAVIO which the enemy was obviously determined to keep intact so concentrated were the flak posts he had established there, cost us

our C.O. - MAJOR P VENTER, (SAAF) - who with his propeller damaged crashed on landing. The aircraft turned on its back and started to burn but owing to the prompt work of some of the Wing Maintenance Section the kite was raised and 'Buster' White and David Watkins, our sick quarter orderlies released the C.O. from the cockpit. Though seriously injured, the C.O. was able to assure us that he would be alright - and that tempered the blow. Much damage was done to the SOUTHERN approaches to the bridge which carries the traffic from RIMINI to RAVENNA across the river and pilots deserve every praise for the way they pressed home their attacks in the face of a most intense barrage of light flak and heavy. F/O. R HUTCHINSON (CAN) and F/O. MOSEDALE - both flak magnets - came back with damaged aircraft - 'HUTCH' being' hit 5 times! Three light flak positions near CERVIA were shot up, the crews killed and the guns left flaming while in two attacks made in quick succession on enemy troop and gun positions in and around LONGIANO, the town received five direct hits and a gun pit containing a general purpose gun sited near a farmhouse slightly to the NORTH EAST of the town was damaged by a near miss. In the afternoon we were delighted to see F/Lt. D WRIGHT who after an absence of six weeks up the mountains on the enemy side of the bomb line had managed to make his way back to XXXXX whence he was fetched back by F/Lt. O. JONES. We understand that the partisan messes now resound with "never mind" and "the dreaded end"!

02/10/44

Weather was dull and overcast this morning when we moved Ops., Armoury and Flight tents down to our new dispersals - and by mid-day a steady down-pour developed and we were released. Fortunately a good flick "You Were Never Lovelier" was on at the D.A.F. Welfare Cinema and most of the types seized the opportunity to feast their eyes on Rita Hayworth - and were not disappointed! A Public Relations Officer appeared in the Mess at tea time and one or two men (no names given) seized the opportunity to shoot the 'newshound' a good line. In a match played at FANO STADIUM this afternoon the Squadron Rugger XV defeated 34 F.S. Corps - 5 points to nil. F/Lt. G. SARLL is now acting C.O. of the Squadron.

03/10/44

Air Sea Rescue operations kept us busy all morning for we were patrolling over a No. 145 SQUADRON pilot who was in his dinghy 20 miles NORTH of RIMINI, 2 miles off shore until the Walrus arrived and picked him up. But the fun was not over then for the Walrus unable to take off owing to the swell, taxied back to RIMINI escorted by our aircraft. The P.R.O. photographer turned up again in the afternoon and took a photograph of F/O. TAYLOR (CAN), F/O. D. STEVENSON, F/Lt. R. WHITE and Sgt. S. SMITH - all of whom took part in the successful attack on SAN GIOVANNI DI GALILEA on Sept. 25th when the HUN colonel and many of his men were killed! We were glad to learn today that Maj. P. VENTER

(SAAF) who is in hospital at RIMINI is making good progress in spite of severe facial injuries and a broken back.

04/10/44

By today the weather over the battle area had improved sufficiently to enable us to get busy again and the army had plenty of targets for us. Enemy gun positions in the orchard of a farmhouse to the SOUTH EAST of CESENA were attacked twice in the face of fierce enemy flak gunners who had obviously made the most of the lull to accumulate large stocks of ammunition. The whole area was well covered and the farmhouse partially demolished. Just before noon F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) took 6 aircraft to attack an enemy strong-point at SALA and a long building in the centre of the town received five direct hits. An attack on one of the bridges over the SAVIO was unsuccessful - not surprising in view of the flak concentration there - but four nebelwerfers - "sobbing sister's" in a field 2 miles N.E. of GAMBETTELO must have had an uncomfortable few minutes. In the evening the Adjutant returned from a very successful messing run bringing with him supplies of chickens, nuts, and lamb and wine, though unfortunately none of the smooth cognac for which '92' is justly famed.

05/10/44

Once again today there was low cloud with threatening rain and though a weather recce in mid morning led by F/O. D. STEVENSON brought back news of a slight improvement, it was impossible to provide the army with close support. But in the afternoon someone reported a 'chute in the sea 1 mile off shore

North of ANCONA and 4 of our aircraft spent several hours searching for it without however seeing anything more interesting than driftwood. The Mess was warm and cheerful tonight – thanks to F/O. J. LONGSTAFF who has made and installed a most efficient stove – and we are able to appreciate to the full the delicious banquet of cold chicken that has been laid out for us. Good show Jimmy – plenty of toast now! In a return match against 34 F.S Corps played on FANO STADIUM this afternoon we were defeated 27 points to 3.

06/10/44

Raining again so it was decided to call the long talked of Mess Meeting – the first since March of this year – and of those who attended that meeting few, apart from the Adjutant and F/O. J. LONGSTAFF, remain with us. Actually there were few suggestions to make for the Adjutant has made such an excellent Messing Officer and has provided us over a very long period with a most varied and appetizing diet, that a change of direction was not required. Hot showers now being available in town many of us took advantage in the afternoon of getting cleaned up before the evening meal of cold roast lamb.

07/10/44

Advantage was taken of a marked improvement in the weather to get cracking on gun positions in the battle area and as far as can be ascertained very satisfactory, results were achieved. All the flak gunners in the Luftwaffe seem to be concentrated round CESENA these days – as we found out when we attacked a gun position at

CELENCORDIA a nearby village – and four 88 mm guns in the same area. WING COMMANDER DUNDAS DSO, DFC, led 6 aircraft show against a square gun pit containing two heavy guns in a bend of a stream near BORGHETTO, while an attack on three emplacements a few miles SOUTH WEST of CERVIA achieved very satisfactory results. Aircraft on the last show of the day led by F/Lt. O. JONES bombed the hill village of MONTELEONE where a concentration of enemy troops had been located and reported heavy damage after 3 bombs had burst right on the target. In all we flew 29 sorties – our busiest day yet. This evening a Whist Drive was held in the Airman's Mess – F/O. LONGSTAFF and F/O. EVANS who attended spent a very enjoyable evening and F/O. LONGSTAFF played his cards, so skilfully that he won the booby prize! Today Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) late of 601 SQUADRON joined us as Flight Commander of 'B' Flight.

08/10/44

Poured with rain all day – no flying possible. No hot showers either. Place closed down for weekly overhaul.

09/10/44

Our only work today was concerned with Air Sea Rescue and for most of the afternoon pairs of aircraft covered a Walrus searching up coast for a dinghy containing an American pilot which was reported off CERVIA. Nothing could be seen apart from an oil patch which 3 P.47's were orbiting and they reported that an aircraft had gone in there. A Rugger match against No. 1 M.O.R.U resulted in a handsome victory – 21 points to 3.

Commanding Officer J.E GASSON

10/10/44

Today the Squadron celebrated its 5th Birthday - and its 3rd overseas - and by the happiest of co-incidences MAJOR J. E. GASSON (SAAF) arrived in the evening to take over command of his old Squadron. No finer or more welcome present could have been given us! It was delightful to see him back in the Mess - looking really fit after 3 months in the Union - and the ovation received in the Airman's Mess at night showed how much his return was appreciated. And with him we were delighted to see Lt. ERIC MANNE (SAAF) - as round the bend as ever - who after baling out on the dreaded Friday Sept. 13th - had made his way back through the mountains to our own lines. With such a kick-off no wonder the Squadron party was such a success. The presence too of GROUP CAPTAIN 'PADDY' GREEN - one of our original Flight Commanders, accompanied by MISS PATRICIA BURKE who with commendable courage braves the swaying mob in the Airman's Mess, and even attempted to sing a song, added to the enjoyment of the party. F/O. 'TUBBY' FAIR (CAN) was in great form with a trumpet - an instrument well suited to his peculiar love for discordant notes - and even the 'Stores Basher' F/O. W. HASTINGS, after being 'baptized' into the Squadron with a liberal supply of vino, was later seen pursuing an unsteady path back to his tent assisted by two unknown airmen.

11/10/44

There was no flying today so perhaps an account of F/Lt. D. WRIGHT'S adventures would not be out of place. It appears that shortly after baling out, an Italian farmer arrived on the scene and from his attitude it was clear that he took DON for a German. However DON soon put him right on that score, and provided with a guide, after half an hour's walking he made contact with the PARTISANS who gave him breakfast. After a couple of hours sleep he found himself fit enough to cope with the situation and influenced by the fact that one of them could speak a little English and that he knew an attack on the GOTHIC LINE was imminent, he decided to stay with them. Moving NORTH to the PARTISAN HQ he met there another Englishman who had escaped from the enemy and after a month they were joined by a SOUTH AFRICAN pilot. During the time Don made several efforts to obtain a guide but was told it was too dangerous to attempt to get through the lines but eventually towards the end of September the PARTISANS decided to send an agent with two guides through the lines and Don went with them. And in his own words;- "We left about 1800 hours in the evening - with me carefully hugging a bottle of 'grappa' - and walked until midnight when we slept at a farmhouse. By this time I was wearing civilian clothes as this made it possible to move by day. We left early next morning and with occasional breaks for food and rest, we walked until mid-day when we found ourselves just behind the lines and we had high hopes of getting through that night. By this time we had three guides as we collected another guide at the house where we had stayed the

previous night. Unfortunately we had to abandon the hopes of crossing that night as we learned that there were 300 troops ahead of us as well as several gun batteries on either side. At this stage two of our guides got scared and left us, so that evening we moved back and stayed the night in a farmhouse. Next morning we hid in the wood near the house to wait for news and learned that troops were still in the neighbourhood and that patrols were out. We hid in the wood all that day and slept at the farmhouse for the night as it started to rain. Next day we hid in the farm as it was still raining heavily and it was here that we had our first and only narrow escape, for while we were hiding in the farm a squad of JERRIES arrived with the intention of occupying the house! But fortunately for us they pushed off. Our position was then becoming too dangerous so we decided to make a break for it that night. Conditions for walking were ideal as it was pouring with rain and the visibility in the hills was down to about 100 yards! We left at about 1700 hours and by 1900 hours we reached a farmhouse. The guide went on ahead to this house and came back with the good news that we were through as Polish patrols had been there an hour previously. We slept that night in the farmhouse and had the pleasant experience of being shelled. Next morning I contacted our troops and my troubles were at an end."

12/10/44

Released today to enable the Aerodrome Construction Company to relay the P.S.P. taxi-way, we had a most enjoyable dance at night in FANO at the house of one of F.O. D. STEVENSON'S friends.

Refreshments were left in the able hands of the Adjutant and F/Lt. R. WHITE - both of them have a delicate hand in bread cutting - while Cpl. F. BROOKS - eagerly assisted by willing pilots decorated the house. All of us particularly 'the wolves' were delighted with the arrangements and the company that had been Provided by STEVE and thanks to Cpl. BUTT of the Electrical Section 'bright the lamps shone over fair women and brave men' as they danced to the lively strains of a very versatile and accomplished 3-piece band.

13/10/44

A most revealing picture of '92' at work this morning - young men for once in a while completely carefree - sitting in the sunshine in cool shade of trees sipping coffee and playing childish games with a galaxy of Italian beauty. The afternoon saw some of us - in particular the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, Capt. M LAWTON (SAAF) and F/Sgt. H. HOOLIHAN (AUS) - working off surplus energy in a Rugger Match against No. 601 SQUADRON. They had a strong team out and with several of our best players absent we were defeated by 12 points to nil. With the 'Wolves' out on their various errands, a quiet air of domesticity pervaded the Mess after dinner - the Adjutant contentedly smoking his pipe and ROGER WHITE sewing away industriously - like some old crone - at a sheepskin waist coat he is making.

14/10/44

At long last we were able to operate again but after an attack, by 6 aircraft led by F/Lt. G. SARLL, on troop concentrations in

BULGARNO where strongly defended houses were severely damaged by two direct hits and four near misses, the weather closed in and a projected attack on PORTO CORSINI where the enemy were reported to be unloading supplies of ammunition, had to be postponed till later in the afternoon. Then Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) took 5 aircraft up there but found the wharves deserted. However, they bombed the quay scoring two direct hits and 1 near miss, and as they flew down the coast heavy flak opened up on them, some of the shells bursting uncomfortably close even though they were 5 to 10 miles out to sea! Today we were proud to learn that S/Ldr. G.J. COX, DFC, who commanded the Squadron from March to August of this year had been awarded the DSO for gallantry in flying operations dating back to the beginning of the war. A whist drive was held in the Airmen's Mess tonight and was thoroughly enjoyed.

15/10/44

Gun positions around the strongly held enemy town of CESENA were the chief targets for today - two direct hits being scored on pits containing two field guns, while 4 direct hits severely damaged a farmhouse against whose West wall the enemy had sited two 110 mm guns. Two gun pits in a field near SAN GIORGIO - midway between CESENA and CERVIA were narrowly missed, while the main RAVENNA-LAVEZZOLA line was effectively cut when a level crossing some 4 miles N.E. of ALFONSINE received a direct hit. Five very near misses in the same area demolished houses close to the line. With a total of 32 sorties this was the busiest day of the

month. A mild distraction in the afternoon – widely advertised demolition work by the RME's on buildings near to our Mess – brought crowds flocking at a safe distance in the expectation of seeing a magnificent upheaval. Eventually after many warnings from the officer in charge to stand well clear a feeble little explosion was heard and when the cloud of dust cleared, the building looked exactly as it had done before. Let's hope the 'brown jobs' make a better show next time.

16/10/44

For once it was not the weather but the necessity of laying a new P.S.P runway that limited our operations to the morning. However before being released for 48 hours at midday we had flown 12 sorties against heavy guns near CESENA in the course of which two well camouflaged 170mm guns received two direct hits! In the afternoon we met our old rivals No. 145 Squadron at soccer and they defeated us in a very close and well contested game by 3 goals to Nil.

17/10/44

Generally speaking this was a day of rest except for F/O. J. LONGSTAFF and F/O. A. EVANS who went out into the mountains in search of poultry for the Mess. Much to everyone's astonishment they returned late in the evening with 4 live turkeys in the back of their truck and from the smiles of general self satisfaction on their faces and the lateness of the hour it was clear that they had found other interesting things to beguile the time apart from the pursuit of food. The DAF Dance Band played in the Airman's Mess this

evening. The performance was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Today F/O. McCANN (CAN) F/Sgt. HUCK, F/Sgt. PEACOCK, F/Sgt. LONG (AUS) and Sgt. HALL reported for flying duties.

18/10/44

With the pilots still at a loose end it was decided that a little enrichment of their minds would be a good thing so after listening to the adventure of ERIC MANNE and DON with the PARTISANS, F/O. J. LONGSTAFF gave a few practical hints on engine handling and was followed by the 'Doc' who discussed 'The Effects Of Changes of Atmospheric Pressure on Flying Personnel.' This was a most interesting lecture and many questions were asked. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON accompanied by the Adjutant visited the projected new site today, and did excellent work by finding suitable billets to house the Squadron in the event of a move. A tiring day for them but they returned well pleased with the sense of something accomplished, something done. The more energetic types spent the afternoon assisting Cpl. BROOKS to lay a brick floor for the Mess – not a moment too soon either – for at present whenever it rains, the Mess is flooded out. 'ENSA PIE' at the D.A.F. Welfare Theatre provided a pleasant distraction for the evening.

19/10/44

Another day of rest – lectures in the morning were followed by a Soccer Match, against 40 A.S.P. which resulted in a draw - 2 goals apiece. The Mess having been moved and re-pitched to everyone's satisfaction, it was felt that no more propitious moment could be chosen for a party to celebrate the occasion, and so it was that

when F/o. J. LONGSTAFF and F/O. A EVANS returned from another Messing run late in the evening they found all the turkeys 'woofed' and an almost impenetrable alcoholic haze hanging over the Mess.

20/10/44

By this morning the new runway was serviceable, and gun positions just across the SAVIO near BORGHETTO and MENSA were attacked on three occasions. A 105mm gun in an oblong pit well camouflaged by trees after sustaining no vital damage in a first attack, was later silenced by a direct hit and four near misses, while the crews of four 88 mm guns grouped in pits in a radius of 30 yards must have been very shaken when two bombs fell right among them.

21/10/44

Enemy gun positions which have been holding up the advance of the Army beyond CESENA were our chief targets for today and bombing results in the morning shows were extremely good. Two 105mm guns about 100 yards apart - sited between two farmhouses a couple of miles SOUTH of FORLIMPOPOLI were attacked by 6 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON Clouds of white smoke rose into the air after a direct hit and two near misses on one of the gun pits while the most NORTHERLY farmhouse was damaged by another direct hit. Four bombs clustered right amongst 3 medium guns in a camouflaged positions on the side of a hill close to BERTINORO - 4miles WEST of CESENA - probably hit an ammunition dump for there was a huge explosion followed

by hundreds of red flashes. Later troop concentrations 5 miles S.W. of CESENA were effectively bombed and strafed but an attack on 3 'nebelwerfers' in the afternoon was made more difficult by the Army who in an attempt to identify the target- by white smoke shells, fired far too many and merely succeeded in partially obscuring it! The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON going back afterwards to check up on results strafed one 'Heinie' who was making a mad dash for his 'slitter'. Was he a little man with a black moustache and a bowler hat asked 'round the bend' MANNE. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON thought he might have been!

22/10/44

A most disastrous afternoon's flying which cost us 1 aircraft and 2 severely damaged - and only by a miracle did W/O. M. DORAN (CAN) who had to crash land just inside our lines, escape uninjured from his burning aircraft. And it was all the result of a 'rhubarb' over BOLOGNA- FERRARA - RAVENNA and Highway 9 - that 8 of our aircraft - operating independently in pairs - attempted to carry out with the cloud down to deck level. Contrary to expectations the enemy was not attempting to move on the roads, but as usual his flak gunners were wide awake and on top line. F/Lt. R. WHITE was hit in the port mainplane by a 40 mm shell, the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON had one of his elevator controls shot away and the other badly frayed while W/O. M. DORAN (CAN) was set on fire and too low to bale out he had to put it down as best he could.

23/10/44

No flying was possible today but at long last Lt. E MANNE (SAAF) has written an account of his adventures - and here's his story - After baling out I landed on the side of a hill where some farmers were ploughing. They came running over to me and helped me out of my parachute. I disengaged it from the grape vine into which I had crashed and hid it under a haystack. I could not talk Italian so I asked them in English where there were some partisans and they pointed in a Southerly direction towards the hills. I saw the plane burning on a hill about a mile away so I thought I had better get going. I made off down the hill in the direction the farmers had pointed. Halfway up the next hill I stopped at a farm for a drink and a rest and there I suddenly realised I was still wearing my MAE WEST. After taking out the emergency rations etc., I gave it to a small child. The old woman brought me some water and some old clothes which I exchanged for those I was wearing; then I set off again to the top of the hill. Here I was contacted by an Italian peasant who provided me with a guide. After about two hours we stopped at a farmhouse for lunch and were given Spaghetti, a couple of fried eggs, brown bread and Vino, little did I realise that for the next 10 days I was going to live on Spaghetti and brown. After lunch a couple of young lads who were Partisans who lived at the farm borrowed two bicycles and with me on the cross bar of one of the bikes we set off, travelling some distance before stopping at another farm where I met 8 Partisans bristling with guns and hand grenades! After spending the night on the hay in a barn we set off at 0900 hours next morning for their Headquarters.

Arriving there at 1500 hours I was delighted to find four AMERICANS - part of a Fortress crew - and a SOUTH AFRICAN private who had been taken prisoner in the Desert. I gave them my Emergency Rations and boy! you should have seen them get in! The same afternoon we saw a P.40 in trouble and the next afternoon a pilot of No. 250 Squadron joined 'our happy band'. I spent five days here amusing myself by burying the insides of an Ox that had been killed for fresh meat, peeling potatoes (on one occasion only) attempting to signal to aircraft with a mirror, lazing around, and 'yarning' with the others. On the fourth day two of the Partisans decided to go back to their farms near the front line and it was decided to go with them.

Setting off at 1500 hours the next afternoon we walked till 0200 hours the following morning where we slept at a farmhouse for a few hours before setting off at 0700 hours. At lunch time the same day we arrived at their farms to find hell going on in the hills just SOUTH of us. Two uneventful days were spent here but about 0700 hours on the morning of the third day one of the farmers came running into the house shouting "Via" - that there was "TEDESCHI" coming up the hill. Grabbing our things we dashed off up the hill and lay down in a gully. After an hour, or so we were signalled to come out, and I climbed out first, intending to get some chestnuts, when happening to glance up the hill, about 200 yards away I saw 30 Jerries outside a farmhouse. I dived back into the ditch, and told the other chaps - and there we lay unable to get out for there were few bushes or trees to hide in. Two minutes later guttural voices broke upon our ears and looking up we saw

about 12 Germans walk past us not more than 10 yards away. How they failed to see us will always be a mystery. After this narrow escape we decided not to stay at the farmhouse any longer so the farmer took us to a cave which was well hidden by bushes. Here we stayed for the next few days and the farmer brought us food. Then at 1800 hours in the evening of the second day he came into the cave to tell us that there were AMERICANS on top of the hill. He took one of the boys up the hill with him and an hour later, they returned with an American patrol - and our journey was at an end.

24/10/44

Today with bitter enemy resistance to our attempts to cross the SAVIO, in strength, we put up 30 sorties in all against a reported ammunition dump just across the RIVER RONCA - 1 mile NORTH of MELDOLA, a store depot at IMOLA, two enemy strong-points about 2 miles, N.E. of FORLIMPOPOLI and gun positions in FORLIMPOPOLI itself. Of these the most successful attacks were made by 6 aircraft led by Maj. J.E. GASSON DFC, (SAAF) whose target - a strongly fortified building - received 5 direct hits much to the delight of ROVER PADDY who congratulated the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON on the result; and by F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) whose 'six' scored 3 direct hits and 1 near miss on two 210 mm guns in FORLIMPOPOLI.

25/10/44

26/10/44

The weather made bombing operations very difficult today and in actual fact it was possible to carry out effectively only one mission in which a suspected M.T. park was bombed. Just after lunch six more aircraft were sent out on an Armed Recce to the RAVENNA - FORLI - MELDOLA area but finding 10/10ths cloud covering the whole area, bombs were jettisoned in the sea. Late in the afternoon the weather was 'claspers' and that night and most of the next day it poured with rain and blew - the Mess was again flooded and there was a frantic digging of drainage channels around tents. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON spent the afternoon looking for billets for the men - eventually returning streaming with water - having lined up a largish house near the sea front - and 28 men whose tents were leaking moved in during the evening. Today even the 'Doc' relented and issued a general Rum ration - the Officers forgoing theirs to enable the men to have a little extra.

27/11/44

28/10/44

29/10/44

For the next few days no flying was possible but cards, 'hooch', radio and roast chestnuts, and a couple of decent flicks — 'The Lady Vanishes' and 'When The Angels Sing' and an Orchestral Concert given by the PESARO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, helped

the time to pass very pleasantly. ERIC MANNE and DON WRIGHT gave a very interesting account of their recent experiences to the Airmen on the evening of the 27th while F/O. A. EVANS - Intelligence Officer - after reading a translation of a document issued by 'The League of Lonely War Women' which amused the men considerably threw in a few marks on rocket bombs. Argument for or against billeting kept the Mess almost at white heat - but the general feeling in the Squadron in view of bad weather, poor conditions of much of our tentage and lead given by Wing who have moved into town - is in favour of moving into billets - and after much strenuous activity on the part of the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and the Adjutant - aided by F/Lt. G. SARLL, Capt. D. LEE (SAAF), and F/O. D. STEVENSON - by the evening of the 29th over a 100 men had been provided with complete billets.

30/10/44

The only show of the day was an attack by 6 aircraft led by F/Lt. G. SARLL on a suspected stores dump at IMOLA housed in 5 smallish hangers. After scoring 1 direct hit and 1 near miss on the most EASTERLY building, our aircraft carried out two strafing runs riddling the target with cannon shells but with no apparent results.

31/10/44

With the return of the good weather, today proved quite a busy one. At 0630 hours F/O. W FAIR (CAN) and F/O. MOSEDALE flew on a weather recce of the Battle area ARGENTA — POGGIO RENATICO — ROVIGO and the surrounding areas, reporting clear weather. Led by Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) 6 aircraft were airborne at

0840 their target being gun positions near the village of GHIARETTI. 4 pits were observed 2 of which appeared to contain guns. Although no direct hits were claimed all of the bombs straddled the target. At 1240 Maj. J. GASSON DFC led another 6 aircraft bombing under orders of ROVER PADDY. The target given was a gun position near a house EAST of FORLI and the results scored were 1 near miss, 4 falling in the target area, and 1 falling wide. Once again, at 1340 6 more aircraft were flying through space, to take up CAB RANK duties. On contacting ROVER PADDY he immediately gave them a target. Again the chosen target was a gun position this time along side of a house EAST of FORLI . Two gun-pits were observed quite close to a house and it is thought that substantial damage was caused when a direct hit was scored on the house. By this evening it was estimated that 85% of the Officers, Senior N.C.O's and Men were in billets and the remaining 15% in good serviceable tents on well chosen ground. A total of 291 operational hours - comprising 293 sorties was flown this month, in addition there were 25 non ops sorties totalling 23.25 hours.

Total operational hours flown by this Squadron this month; 291

Total Operational Sorties flown by this Squadron this month; 293

Total Non-operational hours flown by this Squadron this month; 23
hrs 5 Min

Total Non-operational Sorties flown by this Squadron this month;
156

GENERAL REMARKS AND SURVEY BY COMMANDING OFFICER.

Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF)

I feel that there is very little I can add to the summary of events compiled by F/O. Evans, my Intelligence Officer. The operations carried out by the Squadron are fully described by him and the social life of the officers and men has not been overlooked. The outstanding feature of the month has been the weather, which coupled with much unserviceable tentage has at long last forced the Squadron into billets. Apart from a month in Malta when the aircrew only were accommodated in hotels, the Squadron has been under canvas continuously for 31 months, and even now a few hardy plants, including the Adjutant, still remain to brave the elements in tents. It has been my good fortune to have carried out a tour of operations with 92 Squadron and now to have command of the same squadron for my second tour. There are a few new faces amongst the men; of the pilots only one is doing a second tour on the same Unit, and three of the admin. side officers are comparatively new. The Squadron spirit and morale remains unchanged and has shown itself in a very outstanding manner during the conversion (which took place during my absence) from fighter to fighter-bomber work. There have been many new problems to face and overcome and surprisingly few teething troubles have shown themselves. From a pilot's point of view the change over to fighter-bomber work was not at first popular but since, it has been realised just how important this work really is, and the Squadron pilots have shown the utmost keenness,

determination and even pleasure in the execution of their duties which have been attended by very considerable success.

01/11/44

At first light weather recce of the OSTIGLIA – BOLOGNA area by two sixes led by the C.O. Maj. J. GASSON DFC, (SAAF) and Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) met bad weather close to CESSENATICA and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON ordered Capt. LEE'S section to return to base while he himself carried on. After probing as far NORTH as ARGENTA where about 20 bursts of heavy flack came up – proof if any were needed that the German Flak gunners are always on the job – he returned to base and there was no further operational flying. Shortly after breakfast F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (RCAF) took the four new Sgt. Pilots off on practice bombing. The lull enabled us to complete the move into billets and in the course of the morning the officers moved into their new quarters in the 15th Century Palace of COUNT BORGOGELLI. Now for the first time in its long history the spacious but rather sombre dining hall with its rich panelled ceiling emblazoned with a proud armorial shield re-echoed to the laughter and revelry of young British and Dominion fighter pilots – worthy occupants at last!

02/11/44

Heavy rain all night left the airfield flooded and no flying was possible.

03/11/44

W/C. H. DUNDAS and Maj. J. GASSON each leading a section of six aircraft took off shortly after lunch to bomb an important enemy strong-point in a factory at Tocchero officio about 3 miles S.E of RAVENNA. The bombing was excellent - no less than 7 direct hits being scored on the Southern Central part of the factory, but unfortunately on our return F/O. R. HUTCHINSON lost all his air pressure and attempting to land without flaps, he ran off the end of the runway, overturned and fractured his back. He was immediately taken to hospital and we all hope he will make a rapid recovery from his injury for "HUTCH" is a grand fellow. After a silence of nearly two months we heard today that F/O. MEAGER (NZ) who just disappeared in a strafing run on Sept 6th is now a prisoner of war, so it looks as if the Fuhrer's own pilot as he used to call himself, will be the Fuhrer's.

04/11/44

This morning in spite of a weather recce by the C/O. who reported 10/10ths cloud down to 3 000 ft. 6 of our aircraft were sent off on a Rover Paddy at 0910 hours, but as we expected, unable to find the pinpoint owing to cloud, they were forced to jettison their bombs in the sea 10 miles S.E. of Rimini. Today W/O. M. DORAN (RCAF) who is now OTE left us to return to Canada - lucky man.

05/11/44

An enemy R.H.Q. and heavy gun position in the FORLI area were attacked this morning. A large building surrounded by trees

housed the H.Q. and 2 very near misses were scored in the face of moderate light flak opposition, while some excellent bombing by 6 aircraft led by Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) resulted in 2 direct hits and 3 very near misses on the gun positions. In the afternoon a gun position sited near some houses about 3 miles S.E. of RAVENNA was bombed and strafed and the day was rounded off with an unsuccessful search 6 to 8 miles out to sea off base for a missing pilot of No. 601 Squadron.

06/11/44

Today 35 sorties were flown in close support of the Army who were launching a heavy attack on FORLI. Gun positions and strong points were targets selected, and on the whole the bombing was very accurate – a particularly successful attack made on enemy troop concentrations on the WESTERN side of a little village to the NORTH EAST of FORLI resulted in 5 direct hits followed by a large explosion with dense clouds of white smoke, earned high praise from ROVER DAVID! RONCO village on HIGHWAY 9 about 2 miles from FORLI also took heavy punishment when 5 direct hits were followed by a strafing run from low level. Today F/Lt. O. JONES returned most unexpectedly from SALLAH to which he had recently gone on a gunnery course.

07/11/44

Attention today was divided between RAVENNA and FORLI fronts where enemy strong-points were attacked – 2 positions 4 to 6 miles S. and S.E. of RAVENNA shared 5 direct hits and 4 near misses between them while occupied buildings 2 miles EAST of FORLI and

in the village of SAN MARTINO also suffered from our unwelcome intervention – the attack on the latter led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON being particularly successful for 6 direct hits were scored.

08/11/44

Another busy day with gun positions in the FORLI and CASTRCARO areas as the chief targets. On the whole there was surprisingly little flak opposition, the pits were located comparatively easily and most of the bombs fell right in the target areas. Nothing spectacular occurred but the job was done coolly and efficiently for the loss of one aircraft which developed engine trouble – fortunately on our side of the line. W/O. R. FRY baled out successfully near GANBETTELA and was back in the Mess by the evening quite unshaken. Tonight a farewell party given by GROUP CAPTAIN B. KINGCOME, DSO, DFC, and BAR was held at 233 WING Mess. The A.O.C. was present and officers from the Squadron who attended had a most enjoyable evening.

09/11/44

A weather and shipping recce of POLA HARBOUR in the ISTRIAN PENNINSULAR (there seems to be no end to the versatility expected of fighter pilots these days) was followed later by the only other show of the day – an attack led by F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) on enemy troop concentrations in 12 houses some 2 miles SOUTH WEST of FORLI. After scoring 3 direct hits the aircraft came down to strafe – leaving the enemy in no doubt of the sincerity of our

intentions. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) left today for a well-earned 48 hours of leave in ROME.

10/11/44

Two attacks made on mortar and general purpose gun positions about 5 miles SOUTH and SOUTH EAST of FAENZA – bombs falling among mortars in the first attack, but the other aircraft unable to see the actual gun, bombed the pin point scoring 3 direct hits. Later a most successful onslaught was made on enemy troops who had converted buildings at a cross road 2 miles WEST of FORLI with a series of strong-points, but after F/O. W. FAIR (CAN) and his “merry men” had shattered them with 4 direct hits there could have been little aggressive spirit left among those that survived! This evening gales and violent storms broke upon us leaving a trail of ruin and destruction among the tents down at dispersal – small wonder that we bless the day we moved into billets.

11/11/44

With a temporary improvement in the weather over the battle area, W/O. R. FRY took off 6 aircraft before breakfast to attack gun positions 4 miles S. E. of FAENZA. A wide choice of targets presented itself – for 2 large pits and 10 small ones were located and of the bombs dropped two scored direct hits. Shortly afterwards the weather closed in again and for the rest of the day a series of violent thunderstorms broke over the area while one of the armourers will long remember the intensity of the lightning for he was struck and left unconscious for several minutes.

12/11/44

A tragic day for P/O. J. LANE and W/O. 'AUSIE' SMITH, (RAAF) who took off in the morning on a weather recce of FIUME failed to return. Last heard over the R/T at 1055 hours when they gave a report of the weather en route, their fate is wrapped in mystery. We can only hope they managed to bale out over the other side but judging from the appalling weather that the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and F/Lt. G. SARLL met in the afternoon - lightning, electrical storms and water spouts - when they combed the area between here and the ISTRIAN PENINSULA, their chances of survival I am afraid must be small. A great pity for they were two fine lads. 'Jake' LANE had been with us since MARCIONESE and had only another 10 hours flying to complete his tour of Ops. The only other mission of the day was a successful attack on a couple of houses on the road 2 miles NORTH of FORLI where bombing and strafing was followed by an explosion with black and gray smoke. In the course of the attack F/O. W. FAIR'S aircraft was damaged in the radiator - probably by bomb debris, for 'TUBBY' always presses home his attack to the limit - but he got back safely. A dinner party held this evening in the Mess was attended by various female guests who in spite of language difficulties, seemed to get along nicely with our types.

13/11/44

It was real close support work today when 3 attacks were made on enemy strong-points in the FORLI area. On the first occasion, when our aircraft were told to bomb a church, our forward troops were

not more than 100 yards away – just across the RIVER MONTONE. The other two targets – both of them strongly defended houses – were bombed and strafed to good purpose – F/O. HACKETT returning from the last show highly pleased with himself having put his bomb straight through the centre of the roof! Unfortunately the day's work cost us an aircraft and pilot – F/Sgt. HOOLIHAN, RAAF – however he managed to bale out successfully on our side of the lines so we expect to see him back very soon. This week we are being provided with excellent entertainment by some E.N.S.A. Artists whose show “Fools In Paradise” is one of the most amusing we have been fortunate enough to see out here. As usual 92 were quick off the mark and got well in and practically every evening there has been a bevy of female talent in the Mess after the completion of the show. And a very fine thing for morale. We suspect that there may be more than one broken heart when the show moves on. Why – and I had almost forgotten – each of us was issued tonight with a bottle of beer – always a red letter day in the Mess.

14/11/44

It had rained all night and by this morning the drome was again a quagmire but though we managed to get a couple of aircraft off on a weather recce, conditions were so bad over the battle area and to the NORTH that we were released by 1145 hours. Projected air test had to be abandoned owing to gusting wind but a dinner party followed by dancing sustained our spirits. No news of F/Sgt. HOOLIHAN; he should have been back by now.

15/11/44

It was our turn to provide 2 a/c at readiness, 2 a/c at 15 minutes and 2a/c at 30 minutes from first light to last light but apart from a scramble late in the afternoon it was an uneventful day – and an uneventful scramble too, for F/O. Stevenson and his men. He was told to fly up the coast at angels 2 as far as MARINA DI RAVENNA to intercept a recce kite reported to be flying in at deck level, but no sooner reached this point than they were ordered to return to base. This evening the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and the Flight Commanders entertained two very attractive young Y.M.S.A who have somehow remained undiscovered in FANO since Sept 10th. Shocking lack of enterprise on somebody's part. A quiz in the Airmen's' Mess tonight at which the Adjutant made a masterly question master proved very popular. The mystery of F/S. HOLLIHAN'S whereabouts was solved this evening when we found out that he was in 39th General Hospital with a damaged shoulder.

16/11/44

Once again a very slack day apart from a couple of Rover David shows when attacks were made on gun and mortar positions 2 to 3 miles SOUTH and SOUTH EAST of FAENZA. Intense light flak and intense heavy met our first attacking aircraft but the assault was pressed home and 4 direct hits shattered a house close to which a gun pit was sighted, but on the whole both targets were difficult to locate and ROVER DAVID'S directions were none too clear. We hear today on good authority that the manly features of our Adjutant, F/Lt. L. TRAVIS, are being recorded for posterity by no

less a person than a countess – and we look forward with anticipation to the finished portrait. Today Sgt. KING was detached to R.S.U. for test pilot duties and in the evening we were glad to welcome to the Mess W/Cmdr. H. DUNDAS, DSO, DFC accompanied by W/Cmdr. HUBBIAN, NORWEGIAN V.C. DSO, DFC and BAR, and Col. EATON.

17/11/44

With a cloudless blue sky over the battle area, we had our busiest day for some time. All targets were pre-selected and we had no ‘cab-rank’ duties. Apart from a most successful attack on a gun position 2 miles S. of FAENZA – led by F/O. FAIR (RCAF) in which 3 direct hits and 1 near miss were scored, all other targets were enemy occupied buildings in the FAENZA area and bombing results were excellent – no less than 14 direct hits being scored out of a total of 25 bombs dropped. In addition to these devastating attacks, enemy morale was sapped (we hope) by a more subtle form of poison in the shape of leaflets dropped over FAENZA. On the whole this was one of our most successful days and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, Capt. D. LEE (SAAF), F/O. A. TAYLOR (RCAF), and F/O. W. FAIR (RCAF) deserve the highest praise for their magnificent leadership. By the end of the afternoon the Flight, Armoury, and Ops were packed ready to move dispersal to the SOUTH side of the runway at first light tomorrow to enable 239 WING Squadrons to take over our old dispersals – our third move since arriving at FANO. At lunch time we were delighted to see F/Sgt. HOOLIHAN (AUS) still extremely cheerful in spite of a

damaged shoulder and heavily bloodshot eyes – thankful to be alive at all – as his story will make only too clear. With his aircraft on fire he tried to dive through the door but stuck halfway. Probably the MAE WEST caught on the hinge, anyway “I used my hands to push through the door and got onto the wing but the parachute harness hooked onto the door. The air pressure took me off the wing. The aircraft was slowing down. I have no recollection of opening the ‘chute. I assume I hit the tail plane, as I hurt my shoulder. I next recollect finding myself floating down with the ‘chute open.” There was a large hole in the ‘chute and he landed heavily – but he got away with it and that after all is what matters.

18/11/44

At 0630 hours the telephone bell started to ring violently and continued almost without a break until 0900 hours – and the reason – a highly concentrated attack by LIBERATORS escorted by over 200 MUSTANGS on UDINE A/D where photographic intelligence disclosed that 33 Me. 109’s had moved in yesterday. 12 aircraft had therefore to be fitted with 45 gallon overload tanks with the utmost dispatch and at 1025 hours 6 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, DFC, (SAAF) took off to fly with 8 aircraft of No. 145 SQUADRON to provide area cover, and were followed shortly by 4 more of our aircraft – operating with 12 aircraft of the No. 417 SQUADRON (RCAF). Actually there is quite a maze of landing grounds in the UDINE area and suffice it to say that after the bombing the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON saw about 20 Me. 109’s in blast bays quite intact that had not been bombed! So maybe the

HUN will be airborne again very shortly and that means a chance to raise our score.

19/11/44

Capt. D. Lee (SAAF) took off 6 aircraft at 0730 hours on a rail cut near ROVIGO but finding 10/10ths cloud down to 1500 ft. from PESARO up to the PO VALLEY, bombs were jettisoned in the sea off base and no further flying took place. This evening a most successful dance was held in the Airmen's Mess. Much credit and thanks go out to the entertainment committee - Cpl. BAROTH, Cpl. TUCKER, Cpl. MARTIN, Cpl. BUTT, LAC GREAVES, LAC EDWARDS, LAC BENBOW - for the excellent work they did in organizing such a pleasant evening. About 100 airmen attended and a sufficiency of 'Lady' partners. During the course of the evening the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Adjutant put in a brief appearance and it was a pleasure to see the Adjutant tripping the light fantastic. Sandwiches and coffee were served at the interval and what the ladies could not eat at the time, they discreetly placed in their bags for a later date! Anyway it was such a success that the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's permission was sought and gained for the holding of another dance on the 24th.

20/11/44

The army are still regrouping for the next push and with no close support targets available, 10 of our aircraft carrying 45 gallon long range tanks led by Maj. J.E. GASSON DFC, and F/Lt. G. SARLL, took off on a strafing recce of roads and railways in the TREVISO - UDINE area. The weather was just as F/O. A. TAYLOR (RCAF) had

reported it on his early morning weather recce – which meant that the area between UDINE and LAKE MARANO was quite clear. After combing the railways and roads EAST from PORTOGUARO to GERVIGNANO, our aircraft turned NORTH and almost immediately saw a locomotive travelling at full speed towards UDINE. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON at once went down and following the attack the loco blew up and started to burn. Meanwhile F/Lt. G. SARLL had located some 20 closed trucks in a siding near MANZANO and after a couple of strafing runs, several trucks were seen to be burning. During the first strafing run, F/O. MOSEDALE was hit and after reporting he was unable to make the sea and would have to get out as his temperature was off the clock, nothing more was heard or seen of him. As he was flying at 7/8,000 ft at the time there is every reason to believe that he baled out successfully – and perhaps even now is plodding a lonely way back. And ‘Moose’ was such a keen type with plenty of guts that we hope he will be lucky enough to make it. A similar show projected in the afternoon was abandoned owing to unfavourable weather and 6 aircraft led by Capt. D. Lee (SAAF) took off to recce the BOLOGNA – FERRARA area – chiefly to prevent the waste of fuel that would have followed the dropping of 8 long range tanks. As expected, the weather up there was ‘claspers’ – the aircraft returned without reaching FERRARA and without finding anything to strafe. We were delighted to see Maj. LAWTON (SAAF) for a few hours this afternoon – he is on ROVER FRANK duties – at present at FORLI – and we take this opportunity of congratulating him heartily on his

promotion. We are also deeply indebted to him for the presentation of a 'radio gram' and a whole pile of records.

21/11/44

A heavy day was expected as it was known that the Army was pushing for FAENZA – but in actual fact no more than 19 sorties were flown – all but one of them against enemy strong-points – a little farmhouse in the heart of the hilly and wooded country 5 miles SOUTH of FAENZA. Enemy opposition to our attacks was spasmodic and not particularly concentrated – probably the flak gunners were too busy to cope for the air was full of every conceivable kind of aircraft that could drop bombs! Frankly it was not one of our better days – bombs on a whole showed a tendency either to overshoot or undershoot – still perhaps the weather had a hand in it as it was extremely hazy over the whole battle area. In any case our strafing attacks more than compensated for the inaccuracy of the bombing for on each occasion that the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON carried out a staffing run over the target he left plenty of dead chickens and geese for any HUN that may have survived the onslaught. ROVER DAVID was delighted with the results and congratulated him profusely. A pleasant evening spent in looking over the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's photographs which brought back memories of old days and old faces in SICILY and SOUTHERN ITALY was followed by a visit to the Airmen's Mess for a Darts Match where on the whole the Airmen showed great proficiency.

22/11/44

It wasn't until late in the morning that the Army required our assistance - and then led by F/O. TAYLOR (RCAF) 6 aircraft took to the air to bomb enemy troops dug in by the side of a track running along the edge of a wooded ridge some 2 miles SOUTH of FAENZA. The pinpoint was well and truly plastered while a strafing run forced the HUNS to keep their heads down as there was no flak opposition. In the afternoon a successful attack was made on mortar positions sited in the trees near a big farmhouse just to the SOUTH EAST of FAENZA. 5 direct hits and 1 near miss did the farmhouse no good while a strafing run completed the shambles. And that was our quota for the day.

23/11/44

After the 6 aircraft which took off shortly after breakfast had been forced to jettison their bombs because the battle area was covered by 10/10ths cloud at 2,500 ft. we went to 60 minutes availability and early in the afternoon we were released for the day. Padre SHAW arrived this afternoon to live with us and in extending to him a hearty welcome we know full well that he can't fail to have his mind broadened in contact with '92'. May he have the stamina to face up to it! At all events he got off to a flying start for his arrival coincided with celebration in the Mess - not that there was anything particular to celebrate except the safe return of the adjutant from a liquor run - attended by some very special type bushi-men from 601 and 145 SQUADRON - and we all know what bushi-men are like when they get talked up.

24/11/44

Apart from one ROVER DAVID mission in the morning – when 6 aircraft led by Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) bombed two farmhouses surrounded by out buildings about 5 miles SOUTH of FAENZA scoring 1 direct hit and a couple of near misses and killed about 30 sheep in a subsequent strafing run – there was nothing else till lunch time when a weather recce of FAENZA – ROVIGO brought back a report of adverse weather conditions. The SQUADRON was released at 1430 hours and the weather gradually closed in till visibility was down to 800 yards and a couple of air tests had to be cancelled. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON Maj. J.E. GASSON, returned safely from a trip to NAPLES with S/Ldr. RADCLIFFE of No. 241 SQUADRON and told us that the air was full of frantic homings. Another enjoyable dance was held in the Airmen's Mess this evening.

25/11/44

We were prepared for a long range armed recce this morning but with 10/10ths cloud at 800 ft. the show was postponed. At about 1100 hours it began to rain steadily and shortly after lunch the Squadron was released. Tonight we were delighted to hear that F/O. M.J. FAKHRY (RAAF) who left us at VENAFRO is already on his way from the Middle East to join the Squadron.

26/11/44

8 aircraft fitted with long range tanks for escort purposes were at 60 minutes availability all morning with the weather closed in – but

just after lunch we were ordered to cover two groups of 12 BALTIMORES which were bombing POLA in the ISTRIAN PENINSULA. An optimistic and in the event, a most inaccurate report of the weather en route and over the target was given so the aircraft took off in 'fours' at 1335 and 1415 hours only to find 10/10ths cloud everywhere ranging from 4,000 ft. base to 9,000/10,000 ft. top and the bombers returned without bombing. This evening a very successful Dance was held in the Sergeant's Mess.

27/11/44

To

30/11/44

During this time no operational flying was possible owing to intermittent rain and persistent low cloud. What would otherwise have been a dull period was enlivened by a Dance in the Officer's Mess on the evening of the 28th. Partners were available for all who wished to dance and though a tiled pavement is not the best of floors for dancing, everyone enjoyed himself and all were captivated by the sweet and effortless voice of SIGNORIA ELEANORA GENGA who before the War used to sing over the Italian Radio. On the 29th we were delighted to have a cheery letter from F/O. R.T. HUTCHINSON (CAN) who is now down at the CANADIAN HOSPITAL in NAPLES and to learn that his back is making steady progress toward complete recovery. Here too we must record that the Squadron Soccer Team has had a most

successful month winning 4 games off the reel. No. 241 SQUADRON and an ARMY team were beaten very easily, 6-1, and 6-0, while we defeated the ROYAL ENGINEERS at FANO STADIUM by 2-1 after a close game. The best match was against 2 C.R.U. when the squadron played its finest football this season to win 2-1.

A total of 422.40 operational hours – comprising 341 sorties were flown this month; in addition there were 43 Non Ops sorties totalling 30 hours.

Total Operational Hours flown by this squadron this month
422.40

Total Operational Sorties flown by this squadron this month
341.00

Total Non Operational Hours flown by this squadron this month
30.00

Total Non Operational Sorties flown by this squadron this month
43.00

Total Number of Bombs successfully dropped on Operational Sorties 275 x 500 lb.

Total Number of Bombs successfully dropped on Non Ops Sorties 5 x 500 lb.

Claims for the month are 1 loco destroyed – 1 left burning, and several closed trucks also left burning.

COMMANDING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The diary compiled by my Intelligence Officer, F/O. Evans, gives both a broad and detailed picture of the Squadron activities during November. On the operational side bad weather has both hampered and curtailed our work and was directly the cause of the tragedy which occurred on 12th November. The successes of the Squadron have been largely due to a small group of leaders of whom F/O. FAIR and F/O. TAYLOR have been outstanding in courage and devotion to duty. The bombing results have been excellent and the strafing although not appearing so spectacular has been highly praised by the army.

Apart from a few diehards, the Squadron has been continuously in billets during November. Morals and health have maintained a high level. The entertainment provided by E.W.S.A coupled with those which the Squadron itself inaugurated such as dances, whist drives, tombola, quiz and of course football both association and rugby, have dispelled any symptoms of boredom.

The difficulties of working a Squadron from billets at some distance from the airfield has been overcome. The transition period presented its difficulties and at one time a falling-off in serviceability of aircraft could be said to be directly due to the change. In view of the bad weather however, it must be admitted that no one could seriously challenge the advantages of billets, and it is to be hoped that the Squadron will be fortunate enough to occupy them during the forthcoming winter.

01/12/44

Weather conditions were still unfavourable today and only one mission was carried out – and that in the afternoon when a temporary improvement over the battle area enabled 6 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J. E. GASSON, DFC, (SAAF) - to go out on a ROVER FRANK. After a vain search for a field gun to which he was directed by ROVER FRANK – only 12 empty pits being visible – the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON coming down to 200 ft. in the face of intense light and medium flak about 3 miles N. E. of FAENZA spotted and led an attack on two 40mm gun pits and one 88 mm gun pit - all manned by very determined crews who continued to fire the whole time they were being bombed and strafed! 2 of the bombs were near misses while in the strafing run hits were seen on the 88 mm gun and on one of the 40mm gun pits. Altogether it was a very fine exhibition - not only on part of our pilots but on the part of the enemy for it proved once again that his morale is still high and that this front is to him no side show.

02/12/44

A very successful ‘TIMOTHY’ operation – in face of moderate heavy and intense light flak – in the course of which Sgt. A. WILSON was slightly wounded – was carried out over an area 2 miles SOUTH and SOUTH WEST of RUSSI this morning by 11 aircraft. Clear skies with good visibility enabled F/Lt. G. SARLL and Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) to select good targets and in all, 3 direct hits and 3 near misses were scored on four enemy occupied houses while two strafing runs by the first wave of attacking aircraft, added to the

destruction. In the afternoon Capt. D. LEE led an attack on a enemy strong-point in a big farmhouse surrounded by haystacks about 1 mile N.E. of FAENZA and after 3 direct hits and a strafing run the target was left enveloped in a pall of dust and smoke. An attack on a strong-point on the EASTERN outskirts of FAENZA also met with success.

03/12/44

We woke up to find rain and low cloud covering the whole area and by lunch time we were released. However the break enabled everything for the forthcoming move to BELLARIA to be organized smoothly and without interruption and in the evening we had our final fling before leaving the social whirl of FANO for the desolation of BELLARIA. On the whole life at FANO has been very pleasant. Almost for the first time since ALAMEIN the squadron has been able to enjoy various social amenities and this has been much appreciated by the men. Work has not suffered; on the contrary it has perhaps been carried out with even more customary enthusiasm in view of the relaxation that we have been able to enjoy outside working hours.

04/12/44

'A' party left for BELLARIA at 0700 hours - meanwhile with clear blue skies and excellent visibility over the battle area, the rest of the squadron spent a morning of most intensive Ops in the course of which 23 sorties were flown. Two attacks were made on heavy gun positions near CASTEL BOLOGNESE where our aircraft were met by a most-intense barrage of light, medium and heavy flak.

This made very accurate bombing very difficult but in spite of this P/O. R. FRY managed to drop his bomb right into one of the gun emplacements while a house about 50 yards to the West was severely damaged by a direct hit. Mortar positions near RIOLO were also bombed and strafed but the most successful show of all was led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON when an enemy H.Q, in a cluster of houses 3 miles NORTH of RUSSI was smashed by 5 direct hits. By 1330 hours the weather was closing in and shortly after lunch all serviceable aircraft flew up to BELLARIA. Those of us who were left found the Mess dull and gloomy in the evening and by the dim light of a hurricane lamp six of us ate around a little wooden table and consumed a meal as dull, unappetising and Spartan as the room itself. Of those present only the Adj. could be happy but even he was overwhelmed by the solemnity of the occasion - "parting is such sweet sorrow" - while F/O.'s LONGSTAFF and EVANS betook themselves to an early bed to recover from the night before.

BELLARIA ITALY

05/11/44

Pouring rain and thick mist made it impossible to fly today but the lull enabled us to get well organised in our new quarters. 'B' Party arrived early in the morning - having left FANO at 0700 hours - and were joined later by F/O. LONGSTAFF and F/O. EVANS who brought up the rear. Thanks to the skill of the Adj. who drew the best location out of the hat all the men and the senior NCO's are accommodated in the EAST WING of the old NEW ZEALAND

C.C.S. while the officers have a comfortable house to the rear and use the two E.P.I.P.'s for their Mess tent. With electric light laid on and the old stove installed (that means toast again!) the Mess is extreme homely and comfortable and every one seems happy and contented in his new surroundings. The men spent the day making 'Smokey Joes' for their rooms - very necessary too for its certainly going to be bitterly cold in a few more weeks on this exposed coast. Having sand under our feet is quite like old times and we can 'make like the Desert Rats' again except of course there were no comfortable billets in the desert! And above all we were spared the mud that was blight of our life at FANO. Everyone seems very satisfied with the drome even though the runway is a little shorter than the previous one. At present we are occupying the N.W. end of the airfield, but as soon as 7 SAAF WING move, a new dispersal will be allotted. RAVENNA fell today and a party went up to view the City but were unable to get in as the bridge across the River was still under construction. Nothing daunted however, F/Lt. G. SARLL and F/O. D. STEVENSON crossed by boat and returned late in the evening with the news that the place was full of ITIES in their Sunday best.

06/12/44

Rain fell most of the day and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, who had hoped to take off at 1630 hours with the Group Captain, Wing Commander and Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) to do a patrol of the CESENA - FORLI area where Ju. 87's and Me. 109's have been particularly active bombing and strafing at dusk these last few

evenings, found that flying was impossible and very ill contented he had to remain on the ground. Still we were all cheered in the evening by the issue of a bottle of beer – even though it was a very small one.

07/12/44

Still no flying. In the evening a meeting in the Airmen's Mess where various grievances were raised – the quality and quantity of the food and the cooking of it, the shortage of battle dress and the inadequate supply of gum boots being the most burning questions – was attended by the C. O and the Adjutant who as we know will do their utmost to rectify them.

08/12/44

All today we maintained 2 aircraft at readiness, 2 at 15 minutes and 2 at 30 minutes with Long Range Tanks. During the course of the morning Weather Recces were carried out on three separate occasions by P/O. R. FRY and his No. 2. Conditions in the areas covered; FAENZA - BAGNACAVALO - ALFONSINE - FERRARA - TREVISO remained uniformly bad – 10/10ths at 4,000 ft – until lunch time when there was a slight improvement but no further flying took place. Over base there was heavy cloud all day with a S.E. gale threatening and when this materialised late in the afternoon it brought heavy rain storms and gusting winds which drifted the sand into the mess and over the food. 7 SAAF WING having left in the morning, at 1330 we moved across to our new dispersals near the A.C.P. tower midway along the EAST side of the runway.

09/12/44

As is customary now our overnight state was 60 minutes from first light but with heavy cloud down to 4,000 ft. over the battle area we were not employed until mid-morning when two sixes led by Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) and F/Lt. G. SARLL took off to bomb guns and nebelwerfers 2 miles N. of FAENZA and 3 miles WEST of FAENZA. Very poor weather conditions for bombing still prevailed - 8/10ths to 10/10ths cloud down to 4,000 ft. - but Capt. LEE was lucky to find a gap over his target which enabled them to do good work, while F/Lt. SARLL's aircraft not only found the weather against them, but also some extremely and unpleasantly accurate heavy and light flak - the first burst of which exploded very near to the leader's aircraft. Projected shows for the afternoon were abandoned and the squadron was released at 1530 hours.

10/12/44

It was cold but clear this morning and with favourable weather conditions prevailing over the battle area we had our busiest day for some time - flying in all 23 sorties. Apart from an attack on a large circular gun-pit in a field 2 miles N.W. of BAGNACAVELLO where intense and accurate light flak hit the leader's (F/O. W. FAIR CAN.) aircraft in the port mainplane, attention was concentrated on enemy strong points - two in the neighbourhood of FAENZA and one a couple of miles SOUTH WEST of CASTEL BOLOGNESE and quite satisfactory results achieved. In the afternoon our two Flight Commanders - F/Lt. G. SARLL and Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) - went down to RIMINI to represent the Wing in the

Rugger Match against 324 WING. Apparently it was a most exciting game as these two stalwarts returned 'on their knees' at night and took all the next day to recover!

11/12/44

With the weather still clear over the battle area, 27 sorties were flown today against targets covering the whole front from FUSIGNANO in the NORTH to RIOLO in the SOUTH. Heavy guns N.E. of FUSIGNANO were located as well as a camouflaged position in a field which received three direct hits while mortar positions about 2 miles SOUTH of RIOLO were accurately bombed and strafed. But the outstanding show of the day was that led by F/O. 'TUBBY' FAIR (CAN) whose formation of 4 aircraft (the other two having returned early) not only scored 2 direct hits and 1 near miss on 3 guns near MASSA LOMBARDA in the face of the most intense light flack; but locating half a dozen trailers and two buses parked in a field close to the town came down to strafe and left both the buses in flames and the trailers riddled with cannon shells. Shortly after 'TUBBY' saw, 2 miles WEST of LUGO, a 'flak wagon' parked near a house, and he and his No. 2. W/O. HUCK, effectively silenced that. Very fine leadership Tubbs! Today we were delighted to see the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON up and about again after being ill in bed for some days. 'Nice to zee you, zirr!

12/11/44

Our aircraft were briefed early in the morning for an attack on a church tower at BAGNACAVELLO - a wizard target - but adverse weather conditions - heavily overcast sky - made flying impossible.

But at 1100 hours we heard a very interesting lecture at M.O.R.U. by an Army Major who had been operating for some months over in JUGO-SLAVIA with the PARTISANS, and who was able to give us some first hand impressions of the RUSSIANS whom he found extremely friendly and very hard drinkers. In the afternoon a hard fought soccer match between 'A' FLIGHT and the PILOTS resulted in a draw - no goals scored. Fortunately now hot showers are available for all members of the Squadron thanks to initiative and skill of L.A.C. 'DOC' CHAPMAN, and the knowledge that they are available adds to the enjoyment of any sporting activities.

13/12/44

No flying though by lunch time enemy counter attacks by TIGER TANKS on our bridgehead across the NAVIGLO CANAL N. E. of BAGNACAVELLO forced the Army to send out an urgent call for air support. Two 'sixes' were quickly briefed and ready to take off but the break in the cloud closed in and though the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's six remained at readiness till 1530 hours, 10/10ths cloud from 1500/8000 ft. made it useless for bombing and at 1600 hours the squadron was released. This afternoon we were called upon to provide 4 pilots for immediate posting - our quota for the 16 to be provided by 244WING - the names of all those eligible were put into a hat and those drawn were F/O. C. HACKETT, Sgt. P. HALL, Sgt. T. MUTCH, and Sgt. N. DIXON. We were particularly sorry to lose CLIFF HACKETT for not only has he been with the Squadron a long time but he was a very keen type, and a good

leader with a high sense of Squadron prestige. We wish him the best of luck.

14/12/44

Thick cloud down to 4,000 ft. this morning made bombing impossible but instead a special strafing 'mission - 'Operation PIG' was laid on to attack enemy troops dug in along the NAVIGLIO CANAL - a few miles N.E. of BAGNACAVELLO and only about 100 yards away from our forward troops. 18 aircraft from the WING took part in the attack - our aircraft forming the second wave of six - which went in at 10 minute intervals. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON after investigating from deck level and seeing enemy troops sheltering in the trenches which were dug out deeply into the WEST side of the steeply sloping WEST bank of the canal, led his men on three steep-angled strafing runs to ensure that the shells and bullets really got down among the HUNS. It was brilliant tactics - much damage was done - and a later congratulatory message from the ROYAL EDMONTON REGIMENT confirmed this "when slit trenches along the canal were captured they were found full of defunct HUNS - over 30 killed by strafing". Another fine piece of work in the afternoon was carried out by Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) who insisted on carrying out a bombing attack on an enemy strong-point in a lone house on a ridge near FERGOLA - 4 miles W. of FAENZA - in spite of ROVER PADDY'S advice to jettison combs as the other squadrons had just done. DOUG was adamant and bombing from 3,500/1,000 ft in face of most intense light flak 2 direct hits and 1 near miss were scored. Rounding off with a

strafing run, the house was left enveloped in a pall of smoke and dust. This exceptionally fine show earned well deserved congratulations from ROVER PADDY.

15/12/44

One-of our finest and most successful days, it was distinguished by the brilliant leadership of the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) and they and all the pilots who flew on Ops today thoroughly earned the congratulatory messages sent to them - not only by the Army but by the Group Captain on behalf of himself and all the squadrons in the WING. In all 33 sorties were flown and the chief sport was provided by TIGER TANKS in the BAGNACAVELLO and FUSIGNANO areas. Two were destroyed and a third speeding along a road was bracketed by bombs - one which fell 10 yards behind and another 10 yards in front and then chased by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON strafing madly, but although it got away, the men in that tank must have been very shaken and not inclined to mix it with aircraft again. A very successful strafing attack over a selected area about a mile South of BAGNACAVELLO in the course of which a house blew up with a tremendous explosion which was followed by a pall of smoke rising to 3,000 ft and three more houses were left burning. Fairly intense light flak met our aircraft as they attacked and it is with deep regret that we record the loss of F/O. McCANN, (CAN) whose aircraft was hit and set on fire and went in from 500 ft. 'MAC' joined us shortly after we arrived at FANO and quickly established himself as a very charming and likeable fellow.

16/12/44

Weather 'clampers* over the battle area during the morning - but following a momentary improvement in the early afternoon, 2 'sixes' were briefed for take off almost immediately however it closed in again and no flying took place.

17/12/44

The most notable feature of a very fine day's work was a brilliant attack on an enemy observation post in a church tower in the NORTH WESTERN part of BAGNACAVELLO by 6 aircraft led by Capt. D. LEE (SAAF). Before we were called to give a hand, the other squadrons in the wing had flown no less than 36 sorties in an effort to flatten it. All failed, but Capt. LEE, F/Sgt. PEACOCK, F/Lt. D. WRIGHT, Sgt. DOYLE, P/O. J. OGG, and Sgt. WILSON, demolished it with 4 direct hits and 2 near misses and left it a smoking ruin after a fierce strafing run pressed right home! Two other very effective shows were led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Lt. E. MANNE (SAAF); on the first a gun camouflaged in a hay stack was knocked out and the crew diving for a slit trench nearby strafed while in a second, a suspected enemy H.Q. in a large farmhouse near CASTEL BOLOGNESE received three direct hits. 12 other sorties were flown and in all 29 sorties took place.

18/12/44

All today it was overcast with occasional drizzle and no flying was possible though the squadron was briefed early in the morning for an attack on some bridges - work demanding extremely accurate

combing and a tribute to the high standard of precision we have reached. F/O. J. LONGSTAFF and F/O. A. EVANS obviously anxious to create a good impression returned from a messing run during the morning bringing with them three live cockerel – one of which has since died – only obtained after protracted negotiations and the surmounting of many difficulties – not the least of which was their painfully inadequate knowledge of the Italian tongue. We have now quite a little poultry run – containing geese, turkeys, ducks and chickens outside the Officers billet – enough to provide an interesting and varied fare for Christmas. Meanwhile, thanks to our Canadian pilots F/O. A. TAYLOR, and F/O. W. FAIR, the Mess has been kept well supplied with ‘cookies’ and delicious Christmas cakes and we can assure them that we really do appreciate their kindness and generosity.

19/12/44

The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Capt. D. LEE off on a weather recce of the battle area at 0900 hours this morning were back 35 minutes later with the news that everywhere there was thick ground mist with heavy cloud down to 2,000 ft. No improvement took place and at 1300 hrs the squadron was released.

20/12/44

Today we had 2 aircraft at readiness, 2 at 15 minutes and 4 aircraft at 30 minutes fitted with Long Range tanks – but apart from a series of weather recces of the battle area no flying took place. Conditions until mid-day were uniformly bad --10/10ths cloud down to 2,500 ft. with poor visibility, but the C.O. Maj. J.E.

GASSON airborne shortly after 1200 hrs with F/O. W. FAIR (CAN) found that the weather had improved somewhat and that a 'PIG' operation was possible. In addition he found 3 M.T. about 4 miles W. of FUSIGNANO and after attacking, 2 M.T. blew up while all 3 were left burning fiercely. A really profitable 40 minutes flying. At dusk the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Capt. D. LEE went onto cockpit readiness as the weather was unsuitable for a last light patrol, but no hostile pilots came up and they were not called upon to scramble. We must congratulate F/Lt. 'BOB' SARLL most heartily on his promotion to SQUADRON LEADER. He is going to take command of No. 1435 SQUADRON in GREECE - but he will be staying on leave with us over the Christmas period - and no doubt the 'Flying bomb' will enjoy himself.

21/12/44

Weather over the battle area was 'clampers' all day but a recce revealed that NORHT of RAVENNA and the PO DELTA there were clear blue skies and a little high cloud at 15,000 ft - so 12 aircraft - operating in two 'sixes' - were sent out in the course of the afternoon on Armed Recces of the MESTRE - TREVISO - MOTTA - SAN DONNA area. Finding plenty of extremely accurate black flak and the SAN DONA - MESTRE railway already cut in several places and 3 bridges down, the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON bombed and strafed about 20 trucks on the MESTRE - TREVISO line while Capt. LEE finding no rail targets worth bombing, scored 4 direct hits and 2 near misses on a veritable hive of industry fairly near the coast

about 10 miles S.E. of SAN DONA. On the whole though, both missions were not really profitable.

22/12/44

Today the Squadron suffered its most serious and tragic loss for many months when F/O. W. FAIR (CAN) who was returning to base with his No. 2 after being hit as he pulled out of his bombing dive went in from 2,000 ft. and was killed. In losing 'TUBBY' the Squadron has lost one of its oldest members - he joined us back at MARCIANESE last April - and certainly was one of its keenest, most determined and efficient leaders. Though he was one of those who always by his very daring seemed to attract the flak - he was hit on innumerable occasions - he never failed to press home his attacks to the limit. Not only a fine pilot — he was a most likeable and jolly fellow and his generosity was unbounded. He is a man whom we shall long remember. Of the shows that were carried out, two attacks on enemy strong-points - one in some buildings in the SOUTH EAST corner of the railway station at COTTIGNOLA, the other in a group of houses at CASTEL BOLOGNESE. Capt. D. LEE (SAAF) led both these shows and in all 7 direct hits and 1 very near miss were scored and the Army showed its appreciation of the very fine work by a message of congratulations to Capt. LEE. The only other mission of the day was an attack in the morning on a little tower in COTTIGNOLA that the enemy was using as an Observation Post. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON scored a direct hit but though all the other bombs fell close, it was left standing

though seriously damaged. It was on this mission that F/O. W. FAIR was lost.

23/12/44

A fierce cross wind carrying occasional flurries of snow swept across the landing ground today and made all flying impossible. Over the battle area snow fell heavily and with the distant line of hills well covered, there seems to be a fair prospect of the 'White Christmas' so beloved of crooners. Life in the Mess this month has been very quiet when compared with the more riotous activities of other Squadrons. Its not that we are unsociable - but we seem to be perfectly comfortable and content in the Mess and with plenty of smooth liquor to enjoy - thanks to the unwearying activities of the Adjutant - F/Lt. TRAVIS - we can afford to sit back and take our pleasure in leisurely fashion after the intense business of the day is over. However to-night we extended our hospitality to the WING and had a most enjoyable evening without having a single glass broken or even removed, a most remarkable tribute to the sincerity of the Christmas spirit that must be abroad.

24/12/44

No flying today out after a Soccer match in the afternoon against our old opponents 145 SQUADRON in which we were defeated by 2 goals to 1, the Officers sat down to their Christmas dinner. After appetites had been satisfied and the health of the King proposed and drunk with acclamation, tributes were paid to the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, the Flight Commanders and the Pilots for their magnificent work during the past months. Shortly afterwards we

were joined by members of the Sergeants' Mess and a really devastating evening followed – devastating that is for all who were once proud possessors of moustaches. None the less, a just retribution once exacted, we settled down to a good session which was thoroughly enjoyed by all in spite of the warning that tomorrow was going to be a very busy day.

25/12/44

In actual fact it was not until mid-day that the weather had improved sufficiently over the battle area to enable active operations to recommence and 3 'fours' were briefed to attack gun positions around LUGO. On arrival they found the cloud base down to 4,000 ft. and the HUNS on their toes as usual – and out of the first 4 attacking aircraft, two were very seriously damaged – and in fact both the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON whose ailerons were jammed and JIMMY OGG who was hit in the starboard radiator, both did magnificently to get their aircraft back to base. But though the gun which was seen camouflaged inside a haystack escaped damage we hope that the HUNS lost their Christmas dinner when a house about 50 yards away was hit and left burning. The second 'four' bombed a rectangular gun pit in an open field but the third 'four' were ordered to remain on the ground as the weather was obviously unsuitable for further operations. At dusk the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Capt. D. LEE carried out an uneventful patrol over the FORLI area - landing at 1730 hrs and ironically enough not 5 minutes after they had landed; a Red warning was given followed shortly after by a report that there were 12 to 15 enemy

aircraft in the area. In the evening the usual Christmas festivities took place in the Airmen's mess where during the past few weeks L.A.C. LUND has given full run to his artistic fancies - and very pleasing they are to the eye too. An excellent dinner was washed down by an adequate supply of beer and every one seemed suitably happy at the conclusion of the meal.

26/12/44

With wonderfully clear skies conditions were ideal for combing and we had a successful morning attacking enemy strong-points in the CASTEL BOGOGNESE - RIOLO area which were demolished by 4 direct hits and 2 very near misses, while a couple of observation towers in COTTIGNOLA were bombed and strafed in the afternoon. Once again the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON led a most successful strafing attack on enemy troops dug in deeply along the EAST bank of the SENIO RIVER, 1½ miles below ALFONSINE. Three steep angled attacks were made and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON returned convinced that much damage had been inflicted and this was confirmed later in the day by a message of congratulations from the CANADIAN CORPS. This evening a most excellent concert was given in the Airmen's Mess. Full of admiration for the excellent stage that had been constructed and bewildered by the amazing ingenuity of the lighting effects, we sat down to enjoy two hours of first class entertainment from some remarkably talented artists. Special jokes all at the expense of the 'temporary gentlemen' in the two front rows who fully appreciated them as well as the brilliant work of Cpl. MORAN on the 'squeeze box', and sketches and songs

by L.A.C. BENSON, L.A.C. MERRIMAN, Cpl. TURNBULL, and Cpl. BUTT. Our thanks too go to Sgt. SCROGGIE and Cpl. BALDWIN who devised and produced the show and to Cpl. CORRIN who acted as compère.

27/12/44

24 sorties - comprising of 5 missions - were flown today in attacks on gun positions and infantry positions in the LUGO - CASTEL BOLOGNESE - RIOLO areas. A variety of targets were provided ranging from gun positions in and near LUGO where intensive light flak met our attacking aircraft, to dug in infantry positions near RIOLO - some along a hillside - others along a bank near a cemetery. Both these positions were bombed and then subjected to the steep-angled strafing that has deservedly won this Squadron fame during the past few weeks. Once again we received a congratulatory message from the Army and on the excellent results in an attack by 4 aircraft led by Lt. E. MANNE (SAAF) on a big "U" shaped farmhouse near CASTEL BOLOGNESE where there were two concealed tanks. Accurate bombing resulted in two direct hits and 2 near misses - and later the Army were able to tell us that one of the tanks had been found 'brewed up'. At 1630 hours the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Capt. LEE took off on a dusk patrol of FORLI-FAENZA area but tonight nothing showed up - though we now learn that last night the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON was only 2 miles from 3 enemy aircraft when 'SYRUP'S' RT failed. Very bad luck indeed. This evening the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON attended a party at WING H.Q., held to welcome the new W/Commander. Flying -

WING COMMANDER R.E. BARY DFC. He met several interesting personalities including GENERAL HOFFMEISTER, C-in-C 5th CANADIAN CORPS who expressed in person his admiration of the Squadron's exploits which in recent weeks he had so frequently expressed in messages of congratulation.

28/12/44

No flying took place during the morning though the Squadron was brought up to 30 minutes at 0730 hours in anticipation of a clear patch developing over the battle area. However this did not materialise but as it was fine and clear NORTH of the PO DELTA, 8 aircraft were fitted with Long Range Tanks and in the afternoon the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON took 6 aircraft on an offensive patrol which covered the whole of N.E. ITALY from VICENZA - to GORIZIA. Not a vestige of activity was to be seen on the railways and the roads too were equally deserted except for 3 M.T. each towing an open truck full of people - possibly troops - and moving along a secondary road about 8 miles WEST of SAN DONA. These were strafed by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and his No. 2 but results were unobserved as the aircraft were travelling at great speed and light flak was active in the area. Shortly after entering the circuit W/O. HUCK brought off a very fine crash landing when his engine seized up.

29/12/44

Weather appeared reasonably good from the ground when 4 aircraft led by Lt. E. MANNE (SAAF) took off to bomb 2 medium gun positions about 3 miles NORTH of LUGO However the aircraft

quickly ran into poor weather - 8/10ths cloud at 4,000 ft - and it says much for ERIC'S determination that he overcame the difficulties, located the target and bombed and strafed it. A strong cross wind was blowing when the aircraft returned and this soon reached gale force sweeping sand right across the runway and bringing back memories of the desert days.

30/12/44

Not until the afternoon was it possible to fly and then led by F/O. D. STEVENSON 3 aircraft took off to bomb 2 camouflaged gun positions about 2 miles NORTH of FUSIGNANO. Visibility was very poor and after bombing in the face of medium light flak, two aircraft made strafing runs spraying the whole area very thoroughly. As it was obvious that the weather was closing in, a second 'four' that had been briefed, found their show cancelled and shortly after the Squadron was released.

31/12/44

Only one close support show today - that led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON against an Observation Post in a church about 2 miles NORTH of LUGO in which two direct hits were scored in the face of intense heavy flak which seriously damaged the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's kite as well as that of his No. 2 - W/O. T. HUCK. The two morning shows took our aircraft further afield - one to attack stores dumps in warehouses on the railway line midway between PADOVA and VICENZA, the other an Armed Recce of the BUDRIO - MEDICINA - ARGENTA - FERRARA area where various attacks were made on M.T. located at different points.

An eventful year in which the Squadron converting from a fighter to a fighter – bomber role has proved that it is as adept at close support work as it is at aerial combat. Thanks to the brilliant and inspiring leadership of MAJOR J. E. GASSON, DFC, (SAAF) – ably helped by CAPTAIN D. LEE (SAAF), F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN.) and F/O. W. FAIR (CAN) – we have in the last few months re-established our supremacy as the foremost fighter Unit of 244 WING and therefore of the DESERT AIR FORCE – united behind a C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON who has won the admiration, respect and affection of all ranks, we can look forward to the coming year with supreme confidence.

The Squadrons score now stands at 317 1/2 enemy aircraft destroyed - 107 enemy aircraft probably destroyed - 184 enemy aircraft damaged.

Total number of bombs dropped on operations – 1725 x 500 lbs – approx. 385 tons.

Ops sorties for the month of December	326
Ops hours for the month of December	321
Non Ops sorties for the month of December	31
Non Ops hours for the month of December	24.25
No. of Bombs dropped on Ops	275 x 500 lbs.
No. of Bombs dropped on Non Ops	2 x 500 lbs.
Claims – M.T. 1 15cwt destroyed: 3 x 3Tonners and 2 buses, flamers	
TANKS – 3 destroyed (confirmed by the ARMY)	

COMMANDING OFFICER'S REMARKS

The year 1944 has drawn to a close on a note of brilliant success. December has been a particularly good month, and the results of our close-support bombing and strafing have been exceptionally noteworthy.

Of special interest is the first "Operational Pig," carried out on 14th December, when we strafed enemy front-line positions only 100 yards ahead of own troops. Gen. Hoffmeister, O.C. 5th Canadian Division told me later that enemy casualties from this attack were over 30 killed and 70 taken prisoner for the loss of only two of our men.

Again, later in the month, the Squadron destroyed 3 Tiger Tanks, which have always been a serious threat to the Army.

Unfortunately, though, there are never victories without losses. On 15th Dec. we lost F/O. McCANN, and on 22nd Dec. F/O. FAIR who has always been one of our most brilliant leaders. Capt. LEE and Lt. Manne (S.A.A.F.), who have contributed so largely to our successes, have now gone O.T.E. Yet already the junior leaders are filling the breaches and I feel sure that their results will equal any yet recorded.

There is little else to say as all the events of the month have been so well covered in the diary by the Intelligence Officer.

Christmas and New Year's Eve were happy occasions, but there was a touch of sadness there, as, within the next few weeks our married men will be leaving us to return to the U.K. These men have all served the Squadron faithfully for over four years and they will leave a large gap, but I have supreme confidence in that we will maintain our present high standard after their departure.

J.E. GASSON, Major, Commanding, No. 92 (E.I.) Squadron, R.A.F,
D.A.P, C.M.P.

01/01/45

The effects of the New Year's Celebrations had scarcely worn off, I feel, when F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) took 6 aircraft to bomb an enemy strong-point in a farmhouse 4 miles North of FAENZA. Still accustomed as the HUN is to bombing, it's not pleasant to have 500 pounders falling round your 'Casa' even though the nearest is 25 yards away and to find yourself the targets for a couple of strafing runs doesn't improve a hang-over at the best of times. However let's face it - the bombing was not up to '92' standard. The C.O. Maj. J. GASSON, DFC, (SAAF) - was rather more successful in his attack on another strong-point in a farmhouse at the other end of the line - about 1½ miles S.E. of ALFONSINE -- when 4 very near misses and a couple of strafing runs left the place smoking and heavily damaged. But we were obviously out of favour with Fortune today for with an Easterly gale sweeping fiercely across the 'drome our aircraft were diverted to FORLI where they found P/O. JIMMY OGG who only up for 15 minutes on an air test, had also found himself directed to land at FORLI. For the rest of the afternoon they sat around at 7 WING finally returning by road and arriving here just before dinner was off. Today Capt. DOUGIE LEE (SAAF) and Lt. E. MANNE (SAAF) left the Squadron to return to the Union for a well deserved rest. Both have completed a most exacting tour of Ops and though we are all

sorry to see them go, we wish them the best of luck and a speedy return. Their departure - together with that of F/Lt. G. SARLL - leaves us with only 7 Officer pilot's - but we learn that F/Lt. B. GARNER is on his way to rejoin us.

02/01/45

The gale continued to blow throughout the day whipping the sea into towering breakers and filling the air with fine particles of sand making all flying impossible and leaving us with 5 aircraft still at FORLI. With these 5 away, and Wing Repair full of our holed kites our number of available aircraft is very limited, but fortunately up to now, we are the only squadron that has not had any engine failures owing to trouble with sand. Maybe Fortune has favoured us, but our immunity is in no small measure due to F/O. J. LONGSTAFF whose insistence on the clearing of engines by running them up to 12 lbs. boost on the desk before take-off and careful inspection of plugs between flights has done much to ensure that no trouble has arisen.

03/01/45

A projected attack by 3 aircraft led by P/O. R. FRY on 2 medium guns on the 5th Army front near FOSSIGNANO had to be abandoned, for with his engine running roughly, the leader sought and obtained permission from Commander to jettison his bombs in the sea and return to base. Later on in the morning we were able to fly our aircraft back from FORLI and the rest of the day was spent in checking over the aircraft and in fixing a blanking plate over the front of the air intake to prevent sand from seeping in.

The C.O. insisted on flying a dusk patrol in the FORLI - FAENZA area but though there were enemy aircraft over BOLOGNA and 10 miles WEST of IMOLA they did not appear until late in the patrol when visibility was very poor and it was obviously impossible for our aircraft to do anything about it.

04/01/45

Glorious sunny day - cold but clear - our serviceability still Low owing to extensive inter-flight inspections to ensure that our aircraft were absolutely safe for flying. So apart from a 4 aircraft show - led for the first time by F/O. D. STEVENSON - in the early morning there was no operational flying. Though no guns were seen, haystacks near a large farm building about 2 miles N. of CASTEL BOLOGNESE where they were thought to be concealed, were scattered by a very concentrated piece of bombing; and the whole area was then given a thorough work over by cannon and machine gun fire. In the afternoon the whole Wing was grounded after a pilot whose engine had cut, had jettisoned his bombs and blown up a building close to wing H.Q. We sympathise with them for only a few days ago we ourselves narrowly escaped being the recipients of a similar gift.!

05/01/45

By today our serviceability was much better but we were still short of aircraft. However we managed to get in 9 sorties - 3 against a Company H.Q. in a large house surrounded by trees N.W. of LUGO, 4 on a road cut 2 miles WEST of RIOLO, and two on an uneventful dusk patrol over FORLI - FAENZA. The H.Q. was bombed through

a snow storm and in the face of Intense Light flak, while 1 direct hit cut a narrow twisting road running along a ridge on the POLISH CORP front. Weather here was quite good out to the NORTH and NORTH EAST, F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) reported rain and snow storms with poor visibility and in view of this it was not surprising that we had no more close support targets for the rest of the day. We noticed with passing interest that today all aircraft were instructed to take off from the NORTH - a most judicious provision perhaps in view of yesterday's occurrence - but surely one which betrays a lamentable lack of confidence in the Wing plumbers.

06/01/45

07/01/45

08/01/45

Today the squadron was released to enable the Maintenance and Flight personnel to inspect the inductor systems of the aircraft to ensure that they were clear of sand. Unfortunately by 1130 hours it was pouring with rain and work had to be abandoned for the rest of the day. Rain continued all night and all the next day and it was not until the 8th that it cleared up and enabled the overhaul to be completed and pilots to test their machines. F/O. WARREN HASTINGS - sadly coarsened by his stay with us, for in recent weeks his "oh, bother it!" had been replaced by a far more robust expletive - left us today complete with 700 lbs. of kit for 38 P.T.C. at SENIGALLIA driven there by our Adjutant (whom God preserve).

Far from decrying such a spirit of self-sacrifice in our Adjutant, all who know their maps will realise that the road to SENIGALLIA passes through a certain place which is not without its glamorous attraction for him.

09/01/45

Today we were all set for the big 'pay off' - aircraft on the top line, pilots panting to leap madly into the air - even the I.O. anxious to have something to occupy him after 3 days inactivity - but the Army front almost completely static no more than 3 close support targets came up. All of these were gun positions - two in the neighbourhood of IMOLA, the other near SOLAROLO. With a snow covered ground the gun pits stood out like the proverbial dog's ear! Quite satisfactory results were achieved in the two afternoon shows while the morning show led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON who scored a direct hit on one of two gun-pits had its moments; particularly when some very accurate heavy flak chased F/O. D. STEVENSON and Sgt. J. BURROWS on their bombing run down from 8,000 ft. to 1,000 ft. while 40 mm. guns maintained an intense barrage from positions in a wood near the bend of the SENIO RIVER. A dusk patrol of the FORLI - FAENZA area gave the C.O. and F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) some useful night flying practice and those of us on the ground the pleasure of watching the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON 'grease' his kite on to the runway - a feat which he seems to be able to perform with uncanny judgement on each occasion he lands.

10/01/45

Weather over base was poor all day but in the afternoon with the battle area clear, a show came up and then 6 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, took off to bomb an enemy O.P. in COTTIGNOLA. Amid the snow covered fields this large roofless building was easily visible and a couple of direct hits added to the damage it had already sustained. W/O. T. HUCK'S bomb hung up temporarily but came off later and chased him as he went down on a strafing run. A timely warning from the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, enabled him to evade it fortunately. What a turn! Late in the evening when most of us were abed, F/Lt. B. GARNER - intensely glad to be back - returned to the squadron - and not so tough as he used to be, spent a miserably cold night and complained rather ruefully in the morning of the lack of blankets. Oh Hamlet what a falling off is there! But it's grand to have him back.

11/01/45

For today we had 6 aircraft with 45 gallon Long Range Tanks and the remaining 6 aircraft bombed up. In the middle of the morning 6 of the long range aircraft together with 6 of No. 145 SQUADRON and 6 aircraft of No. 417 SQUADRON escorted 36 BALTIMORES in 3 boxes of 12 - attacking marshalling yards at CASTEL FRANCO in the PO VALLEY. The escort was quite uneventful, though on the return journey the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON reported what may well have been five enemy aircraft in more or less Vic formation flying West about 5 miles away. At midday F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) took 6 aircraft to attack an enemy O.P. in a church tower at BARBIANO

and followed it up in the afternoon with a 4 aircraft show in which the railway Line between FERRARA and SERMIDE was cut at a point some 5 miles N.W. of FERRARA. After bombing the area was combed for movement on the roads and a couple of M.T. to the N.W. of PORTO MAGGIORE were damaged in strafing attacks. We extend our heartiest congratulations to F/Lt. TRAVIS and to F/O. M. FAKHRY (AUS) who have been awarded the M.I.D.

12/01/45

6 aircraft with Long Range Tanks were standing by all day but they were not required. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and F/Lt. D. WRIGHT attempted a weather recce of the PO VALLEY shortly after lunch time but were back in 30 minutes having been unable to see beyond FERRARA for there was 10/10ths cloud down to 1,000 ft. with visibility restricted to 500 yards! And this, apart from a dusk patrol between FORLI - FAENZA by F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) and F/Lt. D. WRIGHT completed our operational flying for the day. The state for tomorrow was once again 6 aircraft with Long Range Tanks with the remaining aircraft bombed up, but with bad weather continuing, the Long Range aircraft were released at 0700 hours and the other at 1000 hours.

13/01/45

S/Ldr. G. SARLL returned at midday from ROME to collect his baggage and departed shortly after en route to join No. 1437 SQUADRON in GREECE.

14/01/45

15/01/45

Rain persisted throughout Sunday but it was not until the afternoon that the squadron was released, and on Monday after a brilliant clear morning, a sea mist swept inland and restricted ground visibility to 100 yards. A 4 aircraft show which had been briefed for an attack on gun positions West of LUGO was cancelled and our aircraft put back to 30 minutes availability. Early in the afternoon, as there was no improvement in the weather the squadron was released and the pilots seized the opportunity to beat the armourers in the Soccer Knockout competition by 3 goals to 1. F/O. A. TAYLOR (CAN) - now promoted to F/Lt took over 'A' Flight today. Congratulations, MO!

16/01/45

17/01/45

On the 16th — though the cloud base had lifted somewhat heavy icing conditions persisted all day, and on the 17th though the weather had cleared sufficiently to allow the WING to operate, the A.O.C.'s release day - about which we have heard so much about since the beginning of the year - came into effect and the busiest people on the squadron were the 57 married men who were hurrying to and fro getting their clearance chits signed preparatory to leaving en route for U.K. in a few days time. With so little flying this month we have been thrown back on our own resources and this I suppose accounts for the popularity of the

Daily Telegraph cross word puzzles. The 'Doc' and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON are the keenest types but their invariable mode of attack is to call upon every member of the Mess to solve a clue, and then when all else fails, the 'Doc' looks up the solutions. In this way very satisfactory results are achieved to the no small delight of the two Gentlemen in question! When these intellectual activities pall, 'Cheesy' and 'Skinny' - a real '92' dog with its white tipped rudder - since joined by 'The Monk' are a never failing source of enjoyment. The Mess resounds with 'Come on Skinny, 'uppy-duppy' and other such inanities while 'Cheesy's' attempted but constantly thwarted activities have been watched with one might almost say a paternal interest.

18/01/45

A day of spectacular bombing on two special selected targets - the first an Intelligence H.Q. and Agent Training School at Villa Dolfin near ROSA, the second an oil storage dump at CASERZE. 9 aircraft led by WING COMMANDER R. BARY, DFC, (carrying 2 x 500lb bombs on a twin rack under the fuselage) and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (who in fact took over when the target area was reached) reaching the area half an hour after the KITTIES had finished bombing, found the house still intact, but planting 9 bombs right onto the Saboteur School they left the East wing burning and the whole Villa heavily damaged "we brok'it that house" as the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON lightly remarked on his return well pleased with the bombing and with the fact that he had caught and strafed 20 Ities running across the courtyard. Then in the afternoon the C. O.

after beating the W/Commander in a toss up for who was to lead – took 10 aircraft off to bomb the oil dump. Though the big tanks (later proved to be empty) were not hit, 7 bombs falling amongst storage buildings close by, started a big oil fire with flames and black smoke which was still burning furiously when 145 SQUADRON arrived half an hour later. Photographic reconnaissance has since confirmed the extent and accuracy of the bombing on both shows. In view of impending losses in personnel for in the next few weeks we are losing both F/Sgt. ROGERS 'A' FLIGHT and F/Sgt. CHRISTOPHER 'B' FLIGHT, -- the Engineer Officer, F/O. J. LONGSTAFF has re-organised Flight and Maintenance personnel and has put Sgt. FAIRLEY in charge of 'A' Flight and Sgt. M^cHALE in charge of 'B' Flight.

19/01/45

4 aircraft were briefed to attack a gun position near CASTEL BOLOGNESE at 0800 hrs in the morning but the show had to be postponed as the weather closed in. This however gave us our first chance to do some Radar combing - quite a new thing for Spits, and so led by F/Lt. A. TAYLOR (CAN), 4 aircraft took off to bomb occupied buildings near CANTONAZZO under control of 'MATTOCK' The aircraft flew up the coast at about 11,000 ft – above cloud – to a point slightly East of RAVENNA, and after getting a 'fix' from Commander, MATTOCK took over. After learning their 'Angels' and I.A.S., control gave them a series of vectors which brought them to the target area. With the aircraft 2 spans apart flying 'finger' formation 240 indicated aircraft bombed

on instructions and then returned to base quite satisfied with the way things had gone though naturally very anxious to hear the results of their work. A big farewell party – in the course of which 160 litres worth of hooch was consumed – was held in the Airmen's Mess to-night to celebrate the departure of 28 of the married men, back to U.K. Although everyone was naturally overjoyed at the thought of returning this was not unmixed with some tinge of regret for all have been with the squadron since it came overseas at the beginning of 1942 – some were old 'Biggin' men – and have accompanied it on its triumphal progress from ALAMEIN through LIBYA, TUNISIA , SICILY and ITALY. And no squadron can lose such men as W/O. NIXON, (Armoury) F/Sgt. ROGERS, ('A' Flight) Sgt. HARDING, Sgt. WHITEHEAD, Cpl WALLIS, Cpl. MANN, Cpl. COBBETT, Cpl. MARTIN, without a sense of regret but we wish them all the best of luck and a posting near home. Celebrations continued till 0400 hours next morning and after the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON had helped to serve breakfast, they were helped aboard a 3 tonner which took them off to ANCONA – the majority of them much the worse for wear. [

20/01/45

Pilots who taken part in the Radar Bombing yesterday went round this morning to have a talk with our old friend of ROSIGNANO days – S/Ldr. MUSSON – who as one might have expected is behind all this Radar bombing, but apart from clearing up one or two difficulties, there was little he could add to what we already knew. Most of the work today for the WING was Long Range

Escorts and though the weather was quite good, it was not until mid-day that we were called on and the two fours led by F/Lt. A. TAYLOR (CAN) and F/O. D. STEVENSON took off to bomb medium guns. 'STEVE' found his target covered with cloud but having seen it obliquely, decided to bomb and did so with unobserved results, while F/Lt. TAYLOR as was to be expected from a target close to LUGO ran into a barrage of accurate medium and heavy flak as a result of which two of the aircraft were hit. No more flying took place but 2 aircraft were on standby until last light. Much to our disgust, 5 Ju. 87's came into the area in tight Vic at 1715 hours. We were not scrambled for the BEAUFIGHTERS were already airborne and dealt with them. F/Lt. B. GARNER this morning fetched F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN) from RIMINI where he had arrived after some 10 weeks in hospital in NAPLES and SORRENTO recovering from a broken back. It was fine to see him back again and we were all glad to know that he had made such a complete recovery. Naturally he had made good use of his time down there and his first request was "What about a spot of leave in Rome now". Later in the morning F/Lt. O.H. JONES whom we have neither seen nor heard of for nearly 2 months since he left us at FANO for a 'social' call on the A.O.C. BALKAN AIR FORCE, re-appeared in a replacement Spitfire he had flown up from BRINDISI. 2 months of cooling his heels on the ground we hope for his sake, will cure him of his desire to roll a Spitfire at 500 ft. even though he does it very well. With 'JONAH' and 'HUTCH' back the Mess is beginning to take on its old shape again. We must congratulate the 'Doc' on his early rising those cold winter mornings - today he made breakfast

at 0915 hours! Still he had a cast-iron alibi this time for he had been up in the early hour's dealing with some Polish soldier who had had his throat cut. Trouble was he didn't get any business, for after taking his patient down to RIMINI he had to hand him over to a Polish doctor who graciously replied to all his remarks with a click of the heels and 'Please'! The 'quack' came away a sad and rather puzzled man! We congratulate Cpl. C. LEVITT on playing a very fine game in the D.A.F. Rugger Trial held at RIMINI this afternoon. Today P/O. SMITH went up to the NEW ZEALAND sector of the Front for a few days and we were glad to see Lt. SAM SHUTTLEWORTH, N.Z. who is coming to stay with us for 3 or 4 days.

21/01/45

After a night of storms and gales, dawn brought clear blue skies and bright sunshine and provided us with our busiest day this month - 20 sorties in all being flown - 6 on a rail cut which was effected 5 miles S.E. of FERRARA, 4 on an enemy occupied building about 2 miles N.E. of ALFONSINE and 8 on enemy O.P.'s 3 to 4 miles S.W. of COTTIGNOLA. The strong-point received 2 direct hits while a bomb which under shot scattered the haystacks standing round the house, and in one of the attacks on the O.P.'s, 250 lb. fragmentation bombs were carried but results were difficult to observe. Tonight after last evening's effort - the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON insisted on doing a dusk patrol of FORLI — RAVENNA but the HUN was not airborne and he landed once again a disappointed man. Today we delighted to learn that Capt. D. LEE

(SAAF) had been awarded the D.F.C. No decoration could have been more deserved for he did not spare himself while he was on the squadron.

22/01/45

6 aircraft with Long Range 45 gallon tanks were briefed at 0915 for close escort to 24 KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING bombing ammunition dumps near PADOVA, and pilots were in cockpits ready to taxi out when word came through that the KITTYHAWKS could not take off from FANO because of a cross wind and so they were put back to 30 minutes. Here they remained until the afternoon when it was decided to send 6 of them on an offensive patrol North of VICENZA. Led by F/Lt. B. GARNER and F/Lt. A. TAYLOR (CAN) they swept along the foothills of the ALPS to the East but there was not the slightest sign of movement or activity on either roads or railways. The 4 'bomber' aircraft put in a couple of shows today when two O.P.'s in houses a few miles S.W. Of COTTIGNOLA were attacked - one in the morning -- ineffectively by 250 lb. fragmentation bombs, while the other was left substantially damaged by either 4 direct hits or very near misses. GROUP CAPTAIN H. DUNDAS, DSO. DFC. and Bar just back from 3 hectic weeks in NORTH WESTERN EUROPE --BRUSSELS, LONDON and all that - and bringing a bottle of JOHNNY WALKER along as a peace offering - held court in the Mess tonight. He was in great form and representatives of all squadrons who were present heard him talk in a most entertaining manner about his experiences over there. His accounts - amplified by his

characteristics gestures of head and neck – how the BOSTON in which he was flying landed at DIJON was masterly while the fact that he could hold out good prospects for the WING getting rockets in the near future, cheered everyone.

23/01/45

12 sorties today on escort duties to KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING – 8 in the morning to 12 KITTYHAWKS of No. 450 SQUADRON, and 12 of No. 259 SQUADRON who with improved weather conditions at FANO were able to take off and bomb the ammunition dump near PADUA – yesterday's target. The afternoon escort to 12 more KITTYHAWKS bombing the rail bridge at PADOVA had to be abandoned as the aircraft ran into heavy cloud and with visibility down to 300 yards it was impossible to continue with the job. The remaining 8 sorties were against the rail network in the PO VALLEY and N.E. ITALY and cuts were effected 10 miles East of CERVIGNANO. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's section strafed a wire operated river ferry crossing the PO 10 miles SOUTH of ROVIGO – killing the 2 men who were operating it and sinking the boat. A few ox-carts were strafed near PORTO MAGGIORE but generally speaking little enemy movement was visible. We were delighted to see at lunch F/Lt. SISSONS – still resplendent with fiercely bristling moustache – and F/Lt. 'CURLY' HENDERSON who have just returned to the WING after 9 months in the U.K., though it was a little disappointing to find that both had been posted to No. 241 SQUADRON. Still they are back and on the Wing and that's the great thing.

24/01/45

10/10ths overcast at 1,000 ft. made flying impossible today and after being at 60 minutes all morning, the squadron was released in the afternoon – a welcome break for the two young Romeo's 'JONAH' and 'STEVE' who were able to sleep off the exhaustion caused by their energetic efforts of the previous night. P/O. 'PETE' SMITH was back in time for dinner after a few days in the line and it was a little disappointing to see 'this man of principle' visibly annoyed, to find that in his absence 'JONAH' had nobly stood in for him, and had smartly filled the breach! That was the unkindest cut of all! Today F/Lt. JONES was posted to No. 601 SQUADRON as Flight Commander, but with the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's permission he will not be leaving us for a few days.

25/01/45

Snow and rain all night and the projected early morning take off with the aid of a flare-path to recce the TREVISO area was eventually cancelled though WING OPS had pilots hanging about in the cold and dark for $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour – before they could make up their minds. The weather remained U/S all morning but after 1200 hours the cloud lifted, blue sky appeared and 2 'fours' – one led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, the other by W/Cmdr. R. BARY, DSO. DFC., went out to attack medium gun positions. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's section consisting of himself, F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN), F/S. PEACOCK and Sgt. WILSON scored 3 direct hits on to rectangular pits which stood out clearly in the snow about 2 miles S.W. of IMOLA.

26/01/45

The projected early morning recce TREVISO - PADOVA again had to be abandoned owing to rain and low cloud, and after some Radar bombing by 4 a/c led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON under MATTOCK control of enemy occupied buildings the Squadron went back to 60 minutes until 1500 hours when 3 'fours' were briefed - one for an armed recce North of LAKE COMMACHIO, one for an attack on occupied buildings, and one on a gun position. As these however were cancelled as weather over base closed in with sudden rapidity and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON taking off to see whether conditions improved further North, found mist and cloud down to deck Level and landed smartly if not very elegantly. In the evening the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON entertained 3 guests from No. 145 Squadron and from this small beginning a party developed as S/L. RADCLIFFE and F/Lt. SISSONS and F/Lt. HENDERSON of No. 241 Squadron followed by members of No. 145 Squadron and No. 417 Squadron came in -- to be joined later by the G/Captain, W/C, S.A.D and other WING types. It was a great social occasion and we hope that it may be the forerunner of many others.

27/01/45

Squadron released today (Apart from 1 'Jilt' show - for junior leaders) - under a new scheme whereby one Squadron in the WING is released every 5 days for practice bombing. P/O. OGG took the show, -- bombing enemy occupied houses in OSTELLATA in face of intense 20mm and 40mm flak with good results - since confirmed by photographic reconnaissance. After a recce of the

FERRAR area during which F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN) strafed some haystacks which appeared to be suspiciously grouped and was rewarded with a burst of flak in his rudder and elevator, P/O. OGG returned to the original target and strafed the houses - this time without opposition.

28/01/45

Snowed heavily today and no flying was possible. Accompanied by F/Lt. JONES, F/O. STEVENSON and F/O. HUTCHINSON, the Doc set off for ANCORNA where he is taking an Anti Malaria Course. The others dropping off en route spent a pleasant week and blessed the snow for making the road impassable until Monday afternoon.

29/01/45

This morning while F/Lt. B. GARNER'S six were busy cutting the railway line between VICENZA and CITTADELLA with 2 direct hits 7 miles N.E. of VICENZA, sweeping roads to the NORIH of LAKE COMMACCHIO and strafing M.T. near ST VITO, the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, was carrying out an armed recce of MEDICINA- BUDRIO - FERRARA - ROVIGO. Up there his R/T Receiver went U/S so after handing over to F/Lt. WRIGHT who went on and cut the railway lines 8 miles N.E. of FERRAR, he and his No. 2 were returning to base when he spotted more than 20 T.R.G.'s in the station at OSTALLATO. Diving into the attack they dropped their bombs on the front and in the middle of the trucks causing a large explosion with a flash of flame and black smoke rising up to 500 ft. At least 10 of the trucks were destroyed and damaged - a most satisfying

result for usually T.R.G.'s are more unresponsive to bombing. Unfortunately our delight at the success of this operation was quickly tempered when we heard that F/Lt. HENDERSON was missing over the sea on his operational flight with No. 241 SQUADRON. Maj. J.E. GASSON DFC, 92 SQUADRON and S/L. GOLDBERG 417 SQUADRON along with S/L. RADCLIFFE carried out search patrols in bad weather conditions but their efforts were fruitless. A sad end for a man who with two operational tours in the DESERT and in SICILY and SOUTHERN ITALY behind him, had after 9 months in U.K. only a few days ago come out again for yet a third tour. His loss is a grievous one and will be felt deeply by all members of this SQUADRON who knew him. So long as England breeds men of his stamp, she need have no fears of the future.

30/01/45

Railways in the PO VALLEY occupied our attention today, and though there was no movement on them there was a large concentration of goods truck, estimated at some 500, in the VICENZA - TREVISO - CASARSA areas. Our first "6" led by F/Lt. A. TAYLOR (CAN) bombed a group of about twenty some 10 miles N. of TREVISO scoring a direct hit on 2 of them and damaging others by 3 near misses while F/Lt. B. GARNER'S "6" later in the morning knocked out 7 more and damaged 3 others on the line 4 miles WEST of TREVISO. Roads in the area were as usual free of traffic but the HUN appears to be using the secondary roads to the NORTH of LAKE COMACCHIO in the ROVIGO - ADRIA area for they were seen to be muddy. This morning Sgt. WIDDOWSON

attempting to make an emergency landing, crashed before reaching the runway but though the kite broke up completely, the cockpit remained intact and he walked out bruised but unhurt. F/Lt. JONES who left us today to join No. 601 SQUADRON as 'B' Flight Commander takes with him our best wishes, we are very sorry to lose him, but our loss is 601's gain.

31/01/45

It was our turn for Readiness today so from first light until mid-afternoon we had 2 a/c on readiness, 2 a/c on 15 minutes and 2 on 30 minutes fitted with 45 gal. tanks. The 15 minutes a/c – flying 6 sorties in all – spent all morning in conjunction with the WALRUS and the LAUNCH – on a fruitless air-sea rescue search off RIMINI for the crew of a medium bomber which crashed into the sea last night. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON carried out a very successful attack with 4 a/c on Nebelwerfer positions about 4 miles SOUTH of CASTEL SAN PIETRO scoring 3 direct hits, but the big “payoff” occurred in the afternoon when reported enemy troop trains halted on TREVISO- NERVESA-SACILE line. Aircraft from all SQUADRONS were quickly mobilised but though T.R.G.'s were found up there, there was no activity, no sign of troops, no flak opposition and the general opinion was that they were derelict. However F/Lt. B. GARNER'S “4” bombed a group of them with 4 near misses followed by a couple of strafing runs and left 2 T.R.G.'s smoking and 2 damaged. This completed our flying for the month in which weather was once again the dominating factor. 210 Operational sorties were flown making a total of 213 hours 30

minutes flying hours. Non operational sorties amounted to 44 and totalled 23 hours 35 minutes. 143 x 500 lb. G.P. bombs and 11 250 lb. fragmentation bombs were dropped making a total tonnage of 33 tons 440 lbs. 17 T.R.G.'s were destroyed and 17 damaged, 3 M.T. were damaged and 1 river ferry was sunk this month.

Association football has been the chief recreation of the SQUADRON this month and though we have actually won only 1 match out of 4 played all have been keenly fought, while an inter-section knock out competition organised by F/o. STEVENSON was going well till some tank transporters ruined our pitch one night. Now we are waiting for a bulldozer to come and level it out again before we can restart.

Matches played to date;-

4/1/45 601 SQUADRON WON 3-2 (DENS HAM 2,
CHAPMAN 1)

15/1/45 No. M.O.R.U. LOST 1-2 (DENS HAM)

12/1/45 No. 145 SQUADRON LOST 1-3 (ELTRINGHAM)

15/1/45 No. 241 SQUADRON LOST 4-5 (DENS HAM 2 CHAPMAN
2)

Once again, this month, flying has been seriously hampered by the weather. Nevertheless, the pilots have maintained a high standard of accuracy with their bombing, as the results will show. Both our old flight commanders have left us, but they have been succeeded by two very able men. F/Lt. B. Garner has returned to take "B" flight, and F/Lt. Taylor has taken over "A" Flight and they have already proved their efficiency.

There is a lot to be said for the ground crews this month. While the other Squadrons were having a bad spell of engine failures, 92 came through without having one. And now, after 29 married men left on the 20th inst. the crews have maintained their high standard of serviceability.

At presents we are looking forward to the good weather and are anticipating intensive operations again, after a very restful three months.

J.E. GASSON Major, Commanding No.92 (E.I.) SQUADRON, D.A.F.,
R.A.F., C.M.F.

01/02/45

Today we were released for an ambitious training programme comprising in all 24 sorties – practice bombing on the range near CATTOLICA, cine gun attacks, tail chases and a 'Jilt' show but the weather was against (or should I say 'for') us and unable to fly we were released in the afternoon. Playing against No. 601

SQUADRON in the Italy Cup knock out competition later in the afternoon we were defeated 3 goals to 1 in a closely contested match. F/Lt. 'DON' WRIGHT left today to take a Junior Commander Course at MALTA we hope he will enjoy the three weeks intensive training. This evening the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, the Flight Commanders and several other Officers were the guests of No. 417 (RCAF) SQUADRON at their cinema show "How Green Was My Valley".

02/02/45

State for the 2nd was eight aircraft with Long Range Tanks and 4 aircraft with bombs at 60 minutes from 0700 hours, but with the weather 'clampers' we were released at 1400 hours.

03/02/45

Mist and low cloud persisted all day and no flying was possible.

04/02/45

By 1000 hrs. this morning weather over base had cleared sufficiently to allow F/Lt. B. GARNER to take 4 aircraft off on an Armed Recce of COMACCHIO -FERRARA - BUDRIO - MEDICINA. When they got up there they found the FERRARA - COMACCHIO area obscured by 10/10ths low cloud. Turning West towards BOLOGNA they could find nothing worth bombing till eventually with 'Commander's' permission, they bombed a secondary railway line about 20 miles S.W. of FERRARA, scoring 1 near miss - after which they returned. In the afternoon the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON took 6 aircraft to bomb railway network in the N.E., and with the weather to the NORTH of MESTRE perfectly clear they found 30 T.R.G.'s on the line a little to the West of CONEGLIANO. These were bombed but unaccountably all bombs failed to explode!

05/02/45

We woke up to low cloud and thick mist and the aircraft remained at 60 minutes till released.

06/02/45

Released for training! Once again an ambitious programme was laid on involving the use of the Practice Bombing Range, 2 practice Rover Paddles, a 'Jilt' show and various cine-gun exercises but with thick haze persisting we were unable to do anything until the afternoon when a temporary improvement in the weather over base enabled 5 aircraft to do some cine-gun practice. Meanwhile the others played football, the Pilots winning 1 goal to Nil against a combined Signals and 'A' Flight team. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON scoring the only goal. Putting the Pilots into the final of the Squadrons Knock-Out Competition.

07/02/45

The mist dispersed shortly after lunch and enabled two 'fours' led by F/Lt. B. GARNER and F/O. D. STEVENSON to go off on rail cuts in the PADOVA - CASTEL FRANCO - TREVISO area. The line was cut in two places 10 miles WEST of Treviso and in the subsequent recce from CITADELLA - SOUTH to PADOVA and the PO DELTA, 7 ox-drawn carts were destroyed and 8 seriously damaged just SOUTH of ADRIA. Plenty of fresh meat for the HUN! The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON left today with S/Ldr. GOLDBERG of No. 417 SQUADRON (R.C.A.F.) to spend a few days leave in FLORENCE and F/Lt. B. GARNER assumed command of the Squadron in his absence.

08/02/45

A fine day at last! Apart from an attack on 2 Field Guns near ST. AGATO - midway between LUGO and MASSA LOMBARDA -- led by the WING COMMANDER, all our efforts were directed against enemy rail communications in the PO VALLEY and the NORTH-EAST cuts were effected on the PORTO MAGGIORE - FARRAR line 10 miles NORTH of PORTO MAGGIORE, on the secondary line just to the NORTH of OSTELLATO on the NORTH shore of LAKE COMACCHIO and near misses scored on the PORTOGRUARO - CASARSA line about 5 miles NORTH of PORTOGRUARO and on the MONTEBELLUNA - CONEGLIANO line. But the sole topic of conversation at the end of the day was the Me. 410 which flew right up the coast past the airfield at about 100/200 feet at 1400 hrs. this afternoon. Pilots, Urks - the lot - watched it cruise slowly along unable to believe their eyes - the gun positions carefully sited along the beach unaccustomed to such things as enemy aircraft perhaps blinked an eyelid but failed to shoot, a 20mm gun which had been practising hard since lunch closed down 'to gape' - the Ops phone rang wildly - screamed a voice "There's a Ju. 188 flying up the-coast!" Wing Ops, M.O.R.U. in a panic - no plots - it might be taking photo's - call up all friendly aircraft - and P/O. D. STEVENSON not long airborne with his section answered. But sad to say though our aircraft swept down and patrolled the coast from CESENATICO to RAVENNA they had no joy. There was a big celebration in the Sergeants' Mess this evening given in honour of the Senior N.C.O.'s and Corporals who will be leaving the Squadron for the U.K.

09/02/45

Another training day - not actually our turn but No. 601 SQUADRON and No. 241 SQUADRON both fitted up with 90 gallon tanks for important escort and long range work. Anyway low cloud and thick mist made their inevitable appearance and once again we had a lazy day. The Adjutant returned this evening a rather sad and harassed man - with him Cpl. BROOKS who had spent anything but a comfortable night in FANO! So utterly different from that which he had planned! Never mind Adj. it's all been for the good of the cause. The pilots won 7-0 against S.R.Q, which brings them into the soccer final.

10/02/45

The Squadron was at 45 minutes from 0715 hours but early on the State was changed and we were put back to 60 minutes with an attack on a road bridge over the RIVER PIAVE in view, but it was impossible to fly. In the afternoon the weather cleared somewhat and two 'sixes' under F/Lt. A. TAYLOR (CAN) and F/Lt. B. GARNER took off to carry out Armed recces of the MESTRE - CASTEL FRANCO - TREVISO area and of the VICENZA - CASTEL FRANCO - MESTRE area. No activity was observed either on the roads or railways but cuts were effected midway along the MESTRE - CASTEL FRANCO line about 7 miles S.E. of CITTADELLA. F/Lt. 'AL' TAYLOR returned a little early from his trip because he thought he had been hit by heavy flak from just WEST of TREVISO and F/O. D. STEVENSON who took over, later strafed in the face of intense light flak, a horse-drawn vehicle on the PO DELTA and had

the rather unusual pleasure of seeing it blow up with a small explosion. On returning to the Mess we were delighted to hear that the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON DFC, had been awarded the DSO, -- a signal honour both for himself and the Squadron which has led with such magnificent dash and brilliance. The Airmen celebrated the departure of the remaining 'tour-ex' married man in the true '92' style and F/O. D STEVENSON joined them with such gay abandon that he was completely U/S for the next two days!

11/02/45

Our turn for Readiness, so our State was 2 aircraft at standby, 2 at 15 minutes and 2 at 30 minutes with Long Range Tanks - and 4 aircraft with bombs at standby for 'Pineapple' operations. As however low cloud and mist rendered all 'dromes in the area unserviceable and as no 'Tac/R' aircraft could get off, our 'Pineapple' four were soon back to 30 minutes. The weather broke temporarily over base twice during the morning and each time 2 aircraft were detailed to take off on a Weather Recce, but on both occasions before they could get airborne the mist clamped down again. At lunch with the exception of 6 aircraft the Squadron was released.

12/02/45

Nothing doing all morning but in the afternoon 12 aircraft led by the GROUP CAPTAIN took off to bomb the 110 yard long concrete road bridge over the PIAVE at GRISEROLA, while 601 SQUADRON kept the flak gunners in the area quiet by bombing and strafing their positions. On arrival our aircraft found the area just to the

River covered by a thick cloud bank, but by bombing from South to North they were able to get a clear run on the target. All bombs missed however (even the Group Captain's two bombs!) but there were a few hits on the Southern approaches. F/Lt. 'BEN' GARNER had a hang-up – bad luck Ben, all that way for sweet F.A.! Today the Squadron XI lost 4 goals to 3 against 310 S and T.

13/02/45

A grand frosty morning with blue skies and sunshine though hazy in the distance. At 10.00 hrs to WING OPS for briefing for the same show as yesterday afternoon – only this time with the WING COMMANDER leading – but with recces reporting the weather over the target as U/S we went back to 45 minutes. But in the afternoon 12 aircraft led by WING COMMANDER R. BARY, DFC took off and put in some excellent bombing scoring 5 direct hits in the centre of the bridge. Subsequent photographic reconnaissance however showed the bridge to be only superficially damaged and it seems clear that a 500lb. M.C. Bomb is not heavy enough really to damage a powerful ferro-concrete structure. The C.O. Maj. J. E. GASSON returned from FLORENCE today and we regret to say in far worse shape than he left us!

14/02/45

8 of our aircraft were fitted up with Long Range Tanks for today but owing to bad weather no flying was possible and we were released shortly after lunch. F/Sgt. PARCELLES, M.T. Section has done some excellent 'rehabilitation' work on No. 7 ('B' Flight) truck and F/Lt. B. GARNER now has a really good 'Gharry' at his

service. F/Lt. ABRAHAMS Ops Officer, 244 WING informed us today with no little pomp and circumstance that we could expect the airfield to be subjected to massed air attacks any minute now! We trust that the source of this report is different from that which informed us a short time ago that the RUSSIANS were in the EASTERN outskirts of BERLIN - but somehow we suspect that it isn't.

15/02/45

This apparently was "Der Tag" for the Squadron was brought onto readiness at first light, the Armourers were ordered to provide crews to man the guns for aerodrome defence, zealous urks dug 'slitters' at high speed, pilots paced up and down scanning the skies and the whole field was agog with suppressed excitement and anticipation. Then at 1000 hrs the telephone bell rang and we were told 'Flap Over'! For the remainder of the morning we had 2 aircraft on 5 minutes availability, 2 on 15 minutes availability and 2 on 30 minutes - all others were at 60 minutes -- then in the afternoon F/Lt. B. GARNER took 6 aircraft on a Long Range offensive patrol which should have taken them up VILLACH in AUSTRIA. However practically the whole of NORTH EAST ITALY was obscured by thick cloud and after an uneventful patrol of the clear portion round AVIANO - CASARSA - OSOPPO - MANIAGO the aircraft returned.

16/02/45

17/02/45

The heavy mist which had prevented all flying on the 16th had cleared by the 17th and we had a comparatively busy day attacking enemy rail communications in the NORTH and NORTH EAST ITALY. Midway between PADOVA and CASTEL FRANCO the line was cut in two places. We congratulate Cpl. LEVITT on playing a good game for D.A.F. XI against the 8th ARMY at CEZENA this afternoon. This afternoon F/Lt. J. PEACOCK crash landed safely on the beach at BELLARIA when his engine failed shortly after take off owing to a defect in the constant speed unit. Now that the HUN is re-appearing in the skies (No. 601 SQUADRON shot down 1 Me. 109 and claim 1 probably destroyed over UDINE this morning) F/Lt. B. GARNER can be heard in the Mess in the evening lashing himself into a fine fury! The celebration in honour of the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's 21st birthday and his award of the DSO which was to have been held this evening had to be cancelled as the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON has been ill in bed for the past couple of days. Anyway we take this opportunity of wishing him all the best and every success in the future. MAJOR CHARD and Capt. MCDUGALL from 5 CORPS are staying with us for a few days to get some idea of how the RAF works.

18/02/45

19/02/45

Thick mist and haze descended over the airfield on Sunday and though the next day was fine and clear an EASTERLY gale made the 'drome unserviceable for all flying.

20/02/45

An early take-off this morning by 4 aircraft led by the WING COMMANDER - and our aircraft were rewarded with the sight of a train nipping smartly into a tunnel just to the NORTH EAST of MONTEBELLUNO. An attempt was made to block the tunnel and P/O. OGG scored a direct hit on the SOUTHERN end! 3 goods waggons which remained outside were well strafed and so was a big M.T. careering along the steep rocky road near BASSANO. Later in the morning an R/T report gave news of a loaded goods train stopped on the line from TREVISO - EAST NORTH EAST to the River near SAN BIAGIO. F/Lt. B. GARNER quickly took off a 'six' but there was no train to be seen. However some goods wagons in SAN BIAGIO Marshalling Yards and on a branch line leading up to a factory were both bombed and strafed and in all 11 T.R.G.'s were claimed as damaged. In the afternoon F/Lt. TAYLOR (CAN) by way of variety went out on a shipping recce looking for barges along the coast from GRADO to VENICE. About fourteen 100ft. barges were seen lying up in canals close to the shore and a group of 3 of these was bombed and strafed. The last Armed Recce of the day was taken by P/O. J. OGG who was hampered by thick haze up to 3,000 ft., but the CASTEL FRANCO - NERESA line was

cut in one place. Today we had one of our now very rare close support shows when 3 enemy occupied houses about 3 miles EAST of CASTEL BOLOGNESE were attacked with some measure of success.

21/02/45

A report that 6 locomotives coupled together were stopped on the CASTEL FRANCO - MESTRE line was viewed with a certain amount of doubt, but strangely enough they were there when 5 aircraft led by F/Lt. A. TAYLOR arrived on the scene. F/Lt. B. GARNER arriving about 40 minutes later found the leading loco pouring out steam as a result of the previous attack but unfortunately nothing better than 6 very near misses could be registered by all our aircraft. However these coupled with innumerable strafing runs must have left all the locomotives at least temporarily unserviceable. Intense silver balls came up at our aircraft as they crossed the PO on their return journey, but though no damage was done, the experience was a little disconcerting. In the afternoon 8 sorties were flown in armed recces stretching from the immediate rear of the battle area as far NORTH as VENICE and PADOVA. The ROVIGO-ADRIA line was cut and a small station about 10 miles S.E. of FERRARA hit, while various ox-carts - one carrying what appeared to be oil drums - were strafed in the PO DELTA. P/O. 'JIMMY' OGG was hit by small arms fire - the bullets passing through the fuselage, behind the pilot's seat and cutting the air pressure pipe. The aircraft were also caught in a box barrage of 88mm. flak over ARGENTA so that the afternoon was

not without its excitement, especially as 'JIMMY' had to make a flapless and brakeless landing - which he did extremely well. During the afternoon the Squadron's Soccer XI won 4 goals to 1 against 8033 AMES.

22/02/45

A readiness day - and apart from the usual state we had 4 aircraft at cockpit Standby for 'Pineapple' until midday when we were stood down. A fruitless A.S.R. search took place in the morning and then in the afternoon the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, leading 6 aircraft bombed MEOLE and as a result of good bombing 12 T.R.G.'s were destroyed. Bandits were reported in the area of PADOVA - VICENZA shortly after by 'Commander' and as they went over to investigate the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, saw an electric train pulling 5 coaches - 3 of them closed - travelling SOUTH from CASTEL FRANCO to PADOVA at high speed - 3 aircraft carried out a strafing run, stopped the train, left 1 coach burning and climbed to chase 6 aircraft flying S.E. at 15,000 ft. These however turned out to be aircraft of No. 72 SQUADRON led by S/Ldr. SISSONS (an old '92' Flight Commander) and so after quite a diverting afternoon, our aircraft returned. In the evening all pilots attended a most interesting lecture given at M.O.R.U. by WING COMMANDER DAY RAAF on the Interrogation and Conduct of POW's.

23/02/45

The star performance of the day - one might almost say of the month was that carried out by 6 aircraft - led by F/Lt. A. TAYLOR

(CAN) – section leaders P/O. ‘Pete’ SMITH and P/O. ‘GINGER SMITH – when about 30 T.R.G.’s were bombed and strafed just to the SOUTH of CAMPOSAMIERO M/Y and four fires – two of them large and spreading – were left burning. When the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, went up in that direction an hour later, the smoke was visible from 30 miles away and as they drew nearer they saw column of smoke rising to 8,000 feet and drifting away across VENICE! Below, the trucks were blazing furiously and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON after doing a couple of strafing runs up and down them, took a photograph of the scene. In all 24 sorties were flown today against enemy communications and results were extremely satisfactory. The TREVISO – PORTE DI PIAVE line was hit twice near SAN BIAGIO, 4 miles from NERVESA on the TREVISO - NERVESA line. 2 direct hits cut the line in front of and behind a group of some 30 T.R.G.’s which were afterwards strafed; and on the same line about 8 miles North of TREVISO 50 T.R.G.’s were bombed and strafed and 3 severely damaged and smoking. The TREVISO – CAMPOSAMPIERO line was also cratered twice and 4 T.R.G.’s destroyed. Today’s score was 34 T.R.G.’s destroyed, 13 T.R.G.’s damaged (3 of them severely). In addition 2 x 50 ft. barges were sunk, 1 M.T., left smoking and several ox-drawn carts damaged - all of them in the PO DELTA.

24/02/45

Today the Army making a United advance to the East bank of the RIVER SENIO in the COTTIGNOLA - LUGO area we had our busiest close support day of the month. In all 14 sorties were flown

in the course of which an O.P. on the Eastern outskirts of COTTIGNOLA was bombed and strafed while the C.O. Maj. J. E. GASSON's 'four' scored two direct hits on gun pits near LUGO and partially demolished the nearby farm with another. Mortars near COTTIGNOLA were also attacked and good results achieved, while rail cuts were effected on the line midway between MONTEBELLUNO and CASTEL FRANCO. This recce saw a fire still burning at the NORTHERN end of the trucks attacked by F/Lt. A. TAYLOR yesterday! An afternoon show was cancelled because of thick haze and the Squadron after being at 30 minutes for some time was released at 1600 hours. Strafing films were on view this evening over at Wing Photographic Section but these without exception were very disappointing. However a particularly good dinner quickly repaired the situation.

25/02/45

We were at Stand-by until shortly before noon when released for bombing operations, the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON took off to bomb a miniature V-2 site near CASTEL BOLOGNESE. Coming down to 400 ft he found the area pitted with shell craters but bombing two houses close by, our aircraft scored 3 direct hits on one of them, and left the other one smoking after a series of strafing runs. You would have thought the Army would have been delighted - but were they? No, they complained that they had been bombed by Spitfires! However it has been established now that our aircraft were not to blame. After an attack by 4 aircraft on the MOTTA - St. VITO line, the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, led the Squadron in an

attack on the railway bridge at MEOLO, but it remained intact though there were several near misses and the railway line to the EAST was cut in 3 different places. This bridge seems to bear a charmed life for it has survived over a hundred sorties by Kittyhawks, Mustangs and Spitfires! On the way back the C.O. Maj. J. E. GASSON saw a big staff car – an open tourer – speeding along in the PO DELTA and though the occupants stopped smartly and hid at the bottom of a bank, they were out of luck for the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON got them and blew up the car! During the afternoon the Squadron XI lost 3 goals to 2 against the Italian team of BELLARIA.

26/02/45

3 aircraft led by F/Lt. B. GARNER were off at dawn to attack the bridge which carries the road from PADOVA to GITTADILLA across the RIVER BRENTA. On arrival they found 50 ft. of the Northern span already missing but they bombed and scored 1 direct hit on the remains of the northern span. Afterwards in poor weather conditions – thick haze up to 4,000 ft – they reced the BASSANO – MONTEBELLUNO area before returning to base. It was still hazy in the afternoon when two sections of 'five' led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and F/O. D. STEVENSON took off to cut the railway line between MESTRE – SAN DONA, and NERVESA – CONEGLIANO. By a strange coincidence both leaders had to return early, and the sections finding thick haze up to 7,000 with very poor visibility achieved little. A mild diversion took place on their return when two of our aircraft attempted to land at the same

time from different directions and late in the evening the pilot at fault (we mention no names) was heard to excuse himself saying. "We always land to the North anyway" F/Lt. DON WRIGHT returned from his course in MALTA today looking much smoother and well groomed than of yore! He was fetched from FALCONARA by F/Lt. B. GARNER in the GROUP CAPTAIN's Fairchild. P/O. T. HUCK who was commissioned some days ago while still in hospital, took up residence with us tonight.

27/02/45

28/02/45

With thick mist reducing visibility to 50/100 yards on the ground, no flying was possible. F/Lt. B. GARNER left to take a Junior Commanders' Course at MALTA, while on the evening of the 28th we held a party to celebrate the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's award of the DSO. GROUP CAPTAIN H. DUNDAS, DSO, DFC. S/Ldr. TURKINGTON (late C.O. of No. 601 SQUADRON) S/Ldr. RADCLIFF, No. 241 SQUADRON and S/Ldr. GOLDBERG, No. 417 RCAF SQUADRON came to dinner and later in the evening representatives of all Squadrons in the Wing came round to have the odd drink.

A most uneventful month - low cloud and thick sea mists cut down drastically the number of flying days and our work has been concerned almost exclusively with hampering enemy rail communications and the movement of goods trains from the PO DELTA NORTH and EAST to the foothills of the ALPS for with the

Army more or less static on the RIVER SENIO close support work has been reduced to a minimum. In all we have flown 223 operational sorties for a total of 302 hrs - 24 non-ops sorties accounted for an additional 17 hours. 49.5 tons of bombs were dropped on operational missions making a total of 466.5 tons dropped since we converted to fighter-bombers. During the month 4 locomotives and 1 electric train were damaged; 47 T.R.G.'s destroyed and 38 damaged; 1 staff car destroyed and 3 M.T. damaged; 2 barges destroyed and 2 damaged; 2 motor cycles damaged; and 10 O.D.V.'s destroyed and 29 damaged.

REMARKS BY COMMANDING OFFICER

Once again this month the weather has variously curtailed operations. What operations there have been, have consisted almost entirely of disrupting the enemy's lines of communication in Northern Italy. This disruption has been accomplished by numerous rail cuts and armed recces of the roads and railways. The latter have not been very profitable as the HUN is far too cunning to move anything during the day. The rail-cuts, though they are extremely unpopular for their monotony, will have a serious, far reaching effect in this theatre. This may not be apparent now, as with the long nights, the bad weather, and a very efficient repair system, the HUN keeps his railways going. But in the near future, with the days lengthening, and a decided improvement in the weather, we shall bring his trains to a complete and almost permanent standstill. The retaining 'tour ex' married men left on the 10th February, and I am glad to say, nearly

all the replacements have now arrived. Although the majority of them have never worked on squadrons before, they have impressed all concerned by their keenness and willingness to learn. In my opinion it has been for the good of the squadron to have new blood sent in, and I think they will equal, if not surpass the results achieved by the old members whom they have replaced.

01/03/45

No flying was possible owing to low cloud and mist which restricted visibility to 50/100 yards. Our aircraft were at 60 minutes till late in the afternoon when they were released. A Rugby Match against No. 145 SQUADRON resulted in a win for them by 12 points to 5.

02/03/45

Work today was varied and interesting. Following close support to the ITALIAN CREMONA GROUP on the coastal sector when 8 aircraft carried out three concentrated strafing runs on the HUNS entrenched deeply on the North Bank of the RIVER RENO the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON DSO, DFC, (SAAF) and W/O. P. HOOLIHAN (AUST) did an Armed Recce NORTH of LAKE COMACCHIO and F/Lt. D. WRIGHT leading a section of 4 aircraft leading a section of 4 aircraft carried out some RADAR bombing under "BONNET" Control of a Store Dump along the FERRARA - COMACCHIO road. Both these missions had their high spots for the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, after shooting up and destroying a ferry boat taking 6 HUNS across the PO was flying WEST towards FERRARA at 700 feet under cloud base when some bombs whistled down through

10/10ths cloud about half a mile ahead of them, while F/Lt. D. WRIGHT's section were taken by "BONNET" right over the ARGENTA flak area and had to break up smartly as they came under heavy fire and start all over again! To round the day off nicely, 4 aircraft wore on "PINEAPPLE" Stand By from 1700 to 1800 hours but as usual they were not scrambled. In the evening all pilots went over to 244 WING to see some Instructional Films on how to ditch a SPITFIRE, cross country navigation and "G".

03/03/45

The day started with an Armed Recce and Rail Cut of the VICENZA - MONTEBELLUNO line when a train and 30 T.R.G.'s in CASTEL FRANCO station were bombed in the face of intense light flak and accurate heavy flak. F/O. D. STEVENSON who led the show had his aircraft holed in 3 places but none of the damage was serious. 8 more sorties were flown during the afternoon on Rail Cuts in the same area and the TREVISO - MONTEBELLUNO line and the VICENZA - THIENE line were both cratered and several goods wagons destroyed while F/Lt. D. ALING returned from one show with half of one of his propeller blades shorn away! We were lucky enough to get two close support shows in the morning - both against targets in the COTTIGNOLA area. The Group Captain, G/Capt. H. DUNDAS, DSO and BAR, DFC, took one show against an enemy H.Q. in a farmhouse while the C.O.'s section demolished a house near which mortars were said to sited. As a relief from monotony 4 aircraft on PINEAPPLE stand by were sent to bomb and strafe barges along the PO. A concentration of 7 of them line

astern about 50 yards apart moored close in to the SOUTHERN bank were attacked and 1 destroyed. A singularly unsuitable target for a 'JILT' show - an occupied house near IMOLA - where over 500 light flak guns and nearly 200 heavy flak guns are concentrated - was provided for 4 of our aircraft led by P/O. S. SMITH and running into the inevitable flak barrage, all bombs fell wide.

04/03/45

4 aircraft were on Stand By for "PINEAPPLE" with half an hours break from 0630 hours to 1200 hours and again from 1500 hours to 1645 hours after which F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN) took them off and was directed by Commander to bomb some 20 barges near CAVAZERE but all four bombs fell on the canal bank. In the morning our remaining aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, on a Long Range Sweep of the UDINE area while B.25's. were bombing the bridges at PONTE DI PIAVE and PORDENONE but it was quite uneventful though shortly after take off enemy aircraft were reported to be attacking some bombers near the Causeway. The 'enemy' however turned out to be escorting Spitfires who came up to waggle their wings prior to leaving their charges! Then in the afternoon P/O. J. OGG took 3 aircraft and cut the branch line from CONEGLIANO NORTH EAST to main PADOVA - VICENZA line and strafed two groups of goods trucks in the same area damaging 9 of them. A couple of practice "ROVER PADDIES" each carried out by single aircraft at 1200 hours completed the tally of jobs for the day. F/O. D. STEVENSON left today to spend a few

days' leave in ROME before proceeding to No. 3 Air Crew Officers School at SULMONA for an Admin. Course.

05/03/45

The large majority of our sorties today were against enemy Rail Communications - 12 against the network in the CASEL FRANCO-CITTADELLA - SASSANO - CAMPOSAMPERO area - which was cratered in 6 different places. The PADOVA - VICENZA line was later attacked by three of our aircraft where the line crosses the RIVER TESINA, and 2 Direct Hits on the NORTH edge of the bridge probably rendered it temporarily unserviceable. On the way back the aircraft strafed some barges in the PO DELTA in the face of intense light flak and as they came out on the deck, Sgt. K. WILSON calling up to say that his engine was 'conking' and that he was going to force land. Nothing more was heard or seen of him but as there is plenty of flat country in this area, he should have made it successfully. 8 sorties were flown against occupied building - one group near COTTIGNOLA the others up near LAKE MARANO. The Army were delighted with the results of the close support mission led by F/Lt. A. TAYLOR (CAN) wiring to say that 2 bombs had scored direct hits silencing a particular troublesome enemy position while a third which fell near the bank of the RIVER SENIO caused many casualties among the HUNS sunning themselves there! The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's attack on three big houses up near LAKE MARANO where according to information received there was a concentration of enemy M.T., was very successful for 2 direct hits severely damaged the most EASTERLY

of the houses while another bomb cratered the courtyard. Haystacks in the yard, stables and barns on the arched ground floors were heavily strafed and a partially wrecked M.T. was seen in one of them. A full day finished with a dusk patrol over FORLI - FAENZA but it was quite uneventful.

06/03/45

6 aircraft were at Stand By from first light this morning till shortly after lunch when they were released for bombing. CAMPOSAMPIERO was the centre of interest today for after the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON had discovered a locomotive hidden under the road bridge just to the SOUTH of the station and had left it severely damaged with a gaping hole in the boilers, 6 more aircraft under F/LT. TAYLOR (CAN) took off almost immediately after his return to attack the bridge. Though it was missed the double track line to the SOUTH and to the NORTH of the bridge was cratered in two places on either side giving the repair gangs plenty of overtime before the locomotives could be towed away and work started on it. Strangely enough there was no flak opposition at all. An attempted rail cut between here and CITTADELLA later in the afternoon was ineffective and with the return of the aircraft we were released.

07/03/45

The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON managed to wheedle two close support shows for us today - both of them attacks on two medium guns 3 miles N.W. of FUSIGNANO. He led the first attack and two very near misses blew the hay camouflage off the emplacements leaving

the guns quite visible to the aircraft when they strafed, while the 4 aircraft led by F/Lt. D. WRIGHT who took off shortly after the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's return scored 1 Direct Hit and 1 Very Near Miss on the most EASTERLY of the pits and left the area obscured in dust and smoke . A strafing run in the face of moderate light flak was carried out and F/Lt. D. ALING (our greatest flak magnate to date - he was hit 4 times in 4 trips) came back with a hole in his port mainplane. 14 sorties were also flown against enemy rail communications; the CASARSA - MOTTA line was cratered in two places and the lino from TREVISO to CASTEL FRANCO and to NERVESA were both damaged by near misses. 2 unwary M.T. were caught on the early morning show -F/Lt. A. TAYLOR spotting one just as it ran out of the fog belt in the PO DELTA and though it made desperate efforts to get back, he was too quick for it and left it severely damaged and smoking. Big 'Bleak' of the day was put up by P/O. J. OGG who flying the C.O.'s kite on the 1st show brought it back with the tail unit damaged - CAT. 2 - and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON had only just finished putting in 7 hours test flying on it! This afternoon we were honoured by a visit from the A.O.C. Desert Air Force who spent a considerable time down at the Ops. Trailer talking to the pilots and to the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON to whom he expressed his satisfaction with the excellent work the Squadron was doing. We congratulate Sgt. M. KING whose commission came through today.

08/03/45

With 8 aircraft serviceable we were at 60 Minutes from 0615 hours and shortly after 0800 hours WING OPS. excelled themselves by demanding all of them on "Pineapple" Stand By at 0830 hours! Anyway 4 aircraft took over cockpit Stand By till 1100 hours and 4 aircraft were at 5 Minutes Availability till 1045 hours. Then at 1215 hours the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON took 6 aircraft to attack an enemy H.Q. 2 miles N.E. of FUSIGNANO and as usual carried it out with the utmost thoroughness and efficiency. F/Lt. A. TAYLOR hit the house fair and square at the SOUTHERN end and completely demolished half of it and after 2 very near misses on the NORTHERN end followed by a strafing run by all aircraft only two walls remained standing to mark what only a few minutes before had been an enemy nerve centre! Several days later the Army informed us that they had learnt from a P.O.W. that the attack had been devastating wiping out almost an entire enemy Company! No more shows today for with the weather 10/10ths low down NORTH of LAKE COMACCHIO we were unable to do our usual rail cuts. Needless to say though we weren't released till 1530 hours.

09/03/45

4 aircraft were on Stand By until 1100 hours - then 6 aircraft led by F/Lt. D. WRIGHT - acting as 'pathfinders' to No. 417 SQUADRON (RCAF) and No. 145 SQUADRON, attacked a reported oil fuel dump at CAMORA 12 miles E.S.E of ROVIGO Bombs were spaced nicely in each corner of the target area while the

subsequent bombing by the other Squadrons got fires going in the dump. Shortly afterwards 6 TRG's were destroyed by 4 aircraft led by F/Lt. A. TAYLOR (CAN) in an attack on a little marshalling yard near LEGNANO while the OSTIGLIA - LEGNANO line was cratered in three places. In the afternoon 3 aircraft led by the Group Captain G/C. H. DUNDAS, DSO and BAR, DFC - and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON DSO, DFC, carried out a diversionary sweep in the north East of Italy, while B.26's bombed GEMONA. Our aircraft swept as far NORTH as the frontier but the patrol was quite uneventful though hopes ran high when the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON reported an aircraft miles away to the EAST. The formation made toward it led by the C.O. Maj. J. E. GASSON who was the only one who could see anything. Eventually a formation of LIBERATORS with a P.47 escort took shape flying SOUTH WEST at 21,000 feet over the ISTRIAN PENINSULA. An Air Sea Rescue patrol late in the afternoon for an aircraft someone from the shore had reported going in to the sea about 20 miles EAST of base was uneventful and with the return of the aircraft we were released.

10/03/45

No targets came up till the middle of the morning when 8 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and F/Lt. A. TAYLOR attacked an ammunition dump dispersed over quite a wide area about 5 miles SOUTH of OSTIGLIA. 2 hits in the target area caused explosions and fires and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON following up with a low level strafe at 400 ft. hit a big camouflaged dump about 30 yards long and 20 feet wide which blew up in a sheet of flame which rose

to 1500 feet. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON flew straight through this and miraculously came through safely though with both radiators holed and a piece off one of his propeller blades! The show was repeated in the afternoon when Sgt. B. BARTON'S bomb hit a house in the area which blew up in a sheet of orange flame. The other bombs fell in the area but set nothing off. A huge black patch 100 yards across and the ruins of two houses scarred the spot where the C.O. Maj. J. E. GASSON had blown up the dump in the morning!

11/03/45

All but 4 of the 22 sorties flown today were against enemy rail communications. Scattered patches of 10/10ths cloud at 4,000 feet hampered our bombing in the morning, and for some reason out of the first 10 bombs dropped six were not seen to explode! However by the end of the day the TREVISO - NERVESA line had been cratered in three places and 3 TRG's destroyed, 4 TRG's damaged and the line cut about 10 miles EAST of TREVISO. In the late afternoon F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN) took out 4 aircraft to look for barges near PONTE DI PIAVE suspected of carrying superstructure bridges for erection over the River at night, but though none of them were discovered, a sunken bridge marked out with stakes with a barge heavily laden with planks moored close by, was located. A direct hit smashed the bridge while a near miss and a strafing run by all aircraft damaged the barge.

12/03/45

We woke up to find heavy ground mist covering base - this however lifted by 1000 hours and we came on to 15 minutes availability - pilots going down to the drome to await the arrival of the A.V.M. of Supply and Production who was visiting the WING. At lunchtime 6 aircraft led by F/Lt. D. WRIGHT cut the NERVESA - MESTRE line in four places, and shortly afterwards the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON took 4 aircraft to cut the VICENZA - BONIFACIO line. Two direct hits and 1 near miss destroyed 6 and damaged 2 out of a group of TRG's near VICENZA - Sgt. J. BURROWS bombs blowing 4 of them completely off the line! On the way back 1 M.T. was blown up near ROVIGO and an Armoured Scout Car destroyed in the PO DELTA. Our aircraft were forced to land at CERVIA as the whole of the area around base quite suddenly was enveloped in a thick sea mist - however not long afterwards it cleared sufficiently to allow them to get back before nightfall. Today F/Lt. 'Al' TAYLOR went O.T.E.. and P/O. FRY returned from the gunnery course at BALLAH.

13/03/45

The early morning mist lifted about 0800 hours when we brought 6 aircraft onto Readiness while 4 more were briefed to attack guns near CASTEL BOLOGNESE. However before they could get off the mist clamped down again and with the 'drome U/S our Readiness aircraft were put back to 30 Minutes where they remained till released after lunch. During the morning lectures on the new Gyro Gun Sight were given to pilots by F/Lt. FARMAN of Desert Air

Force. The final of the Squadron knock out competition was played off this afternoon and in a keenly contested game Signals defeated the Pilots by 2 goals to 1. Today the Adjutant was posted.

14/03/45

One of the rare close support shows came up today when the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON made two consecutive attacks - each with 4 aircraft on an enemy occupied building about 1 mile WEST of FUSIGNANO, scoring in all three direct hits and 1 near miss all on the WESTERN end of the house, while the EASTERN end was severely damaged by strafing runs. In the last attack W/O. P. HOOLIHAN (AUS) was hit by small arms fire and a bullet exploding in the cockpit narrowly missed one of his vital parts. The rudder controls were also damaged but he managed to bring off a successful emergency landing at CASENATICO. 10 sorties were flown against rail communications as a result of which the CASTEL FRANCO - BELLUNO line was cratered in three places and a series of vivid green flashes from the power pylons close by probably deprived the local inhabitants of their electric light supply for some days. The PORDENONE - CASARSA line was also cut, but unfortunately after a subsequent strafing attack on some TRG's, P/O. OGG who was leading called up to say that his engine was running very rough. Shortly after glycol was seen streaming from his machine and at about 2,000 feet he baled out and was seen to land successfully in a fairly isolated piece of marshy country near a farmhouse SOUTH of PORDENONE. This should give him a very good chance of escape. Best of luck Jimmy - we'll be looking out for

you. Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) was today posted to us from No. 145 SQUADRON as 'A' Flight Commander and we extend to him a very hearty welcome .

15/03/45

A thick mist made all flying impossible today and with the imminent departure of F/Lt. L. TRAVIS the evening was tinged with melancholy for the Adj. has been with the Squadron for nearly two years joining it way back in NORTH AFRICA at GOURSRINE. During that time he has served the Squadron faithfully and made the welfare of the pilots and the maintenance of the high traditions of '92' his sole duty. We are very sorry to lose him and we hope that before he leaves Italy his crowning ambition may be achieved.

16/03/45

Pilots reported thick haze up to 5,000 feet covering Northern Italy today, but in spite of this the MONTEBELLUNO - CASTEL FRANCO line was cratered in 2 places by 4 aircraft led by Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) and the PADOVA - CASTEL FRANCO line was damaged later in the day by a near miss, while after a 6 aircraft attack led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON on enemy occupied buildings near FUSIGNANO two houses were left severely damaged and burning. The last show of the day an area cover sweep for 3 MOSQUITOES on a mission in the PO DELTA had to be abandoned for on arrival, the whole area was found to be covered with 10/10ths cloud at 3,000 feet. Three new pilots - F/Lt. P. CANNAM, F/O. BRASLEY and p/O. J. PARKER arrived today, and the Adjutant left early this morning for No. 3. B.P.D. NAPLES.

17/03/45

There was no operational flying today but at CERVIA the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and Capt. R. JACOBS took part along with other selected pilots of 244 WING in a fighter-bomber demonstration of tank bobbing and house strafing. Ground crew Sergeants played the Aircrew Sergeants in a Soccer Match this afternoon and were defeated by 6 goals to nil. F/Lt. BIDDLECOMBE arrived this afternoon to take over the duties as Squadron Adjutant.

18/03/45

In the morning we cratered the CASARSA- PORDENONE line in two places and attacked and destroyed some TRG's in a little siding at PIOMBO about 5 miles S.E. of CASTEL FRANCO, following these routine jobs up in the afternoon with a 12 aircraft attack led by WING COMMANDER R. BARY DFC on a reported fuel dump at CONSANDOLO about 5 miles N.W. of ARGENTA. But in spite of 4 direct hits right among the buildings and 1 direct hit on a building by Capt. R. JACOBS, there were no spectacular results.

19/03/45

6 aircraft were at Stand By all day - the 30 Minute aircraft doing a Weather Recce in the early morning of N.E. ITALY and the ISTRIAN PENINSULA, the other 4 aircraft carrying an uneventful dusk patrol of the FORLI - FAENZA and RAVENNA - FORLI areas. Our remaining aircraft were bombed up and carried out 10 sorties against enemy communications cutting the MONSELICE - ROVIGO line and strafing 4 barges in the CITTADELLA area. The C.O. Maj.

J.E. GASSON led 4 aircraft against a reported stores dump near ARGENTA and 2 direct hits were scored on the building. Mr. CLARE LUCE BOOTH visited the Squadron this morning and was photographed outside the Ops Trailer with some of the pilots and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON.

20/03/45

A busy morning - we had flown 22 sorties by lunch time -- a variety of targets ranging from enemy rail communications to the NORTH and NORTH EAST to the important oil and barge route which extends from the PO DELTA along the coast to GRADO and medium guns just to the NORTH of ALFONSINE - and plenty of incidents starting off in a small way when F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN) was forced to return from an early show when an electrical short started a small fire in his cockpit and finishing in a blaze of excitement when Capt. R. JACOBS was forced to bale out in the sea after being hit by flak in an attack on some barges in the PO DELTA was picked up within 30 minutes by an A.S.R. CATALINA! In just over an hour from baling out he was eating lunch in the Mess, and in the afternoon he was playing in the needle game of the season - Officers Mess v Sergeants Mess - where he received more damage in the shape of a black eye than he had taken from his passage of arms with the enemy in the morning! Much to the surprise of the Sergeants, the Officers played them to a draw, 3 goals all - and were unlucky not to win. The match was followed by a Party in the Sergeants Mess in the evening and P/O. R. FRY did himself a lot of good by throwing a crafty dart or two! It was fitting

too that today should have marked the award of the DFC to F/Lt. 'AL' TAYLOR - no more than he deserved, for the consistent accuracy of his bobbing has long been legendary on this Squadron and well we remember the day when a pilot returning from a sortie said 'The Mo' off form today - he only got a near miss!

21/03/45

We were at 45 Minutes all morning - the C.O. reporting it very hazy even up at 10,000 feet when he air-tested "J". In the afternoon the rail bridge over the RIVER TESINA near VICENZA was attacked by 12 aircraft - led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON but no damage was done - a 500 lb. with .025 delay obviously being unsuitable for the job for the C.O. who scored a direct hit on the edge of the N.W. span saw his bomb bounce off the bridge and explode in the water. Shortly after our aircraft returned the Squadron was released and we adjourned to the Mess to sample an excellent cake as well as sweets, cigarettes and tinned stuff which Lt. E. MANNE had sent up to us from the Union. A very welcome gift ERIC and appreciated by all of us.

22/03/45

26 sorties were flown today 20 of them specifically against rail communications -the other 6 ultimately against them for they were unable to find suitable targets to bomb on the oil and barge route. Bombing was not up to our usual standard though the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON leading 6 aircraft carried out a magnificent show following up excellent bombing when 4 direct hits and 2 near misses destroyed 10 TRG's and severely cratered the MESTRE -

TREVISO line about 5 miles NORTH of TREVISO - with a most intensive strafing recce in the course of which 4 HDV's and 4 carts in the station yard in the TREVISO area were damaged, a 3 tonner moving into MESTRE from the EAST was hit, and 2 x 40 ft. barges moored in a canal and 7 x 50 ft. barges in the PO DELTA - all damaged. A really intensive hour and a half's trip.

23/03/45

At first light Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) took 6 aircraft off to attack reported troop concentrations in the CONEGLANO - SACILE area - but with 10/10ths haze up to 8/9,000 ft. covering the area no troops were seen so the SACILE - NERVESA line was bombed and cratered in 3 places. Shortly after Capt. R. JACOBS spotted some M.T. parked in the narrow main street of the little village of GATARME 10 miles East of CONEGLIANO. He and his No. 2 went down to strafe and then informed some P.47's in the area of the presence of M.T. and these attacked with rockets and were heard reporting later that they had managed to start fires going. A good piece of co-operation there. 14 more sorties were flown against rail communications and goods waggons in the course of which the BASSONO - CITTADELLA and the CITTADELLA - CASTEL FRANCO line was cratered in 4 places, 10 TRG's were destroyed and 24 TRG's damaged! P/O. R. FRY, returning from the last sortie and flying the C.O.'s new aircraft - was hit by heavy flak in the PO DELTA and landed holed in the mainplane, fuselage and elevators! The only other show of the day was a laborious and uneventful 2

hour escort to KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING who were attacking targets in the UDINE area.

24/03/45

With Long Range 45 gallon Tanks fitted we spent this morning escorting KITTYHAWKS of 239 WING bombing a railway bridge just to the NORTH of LAKE MARANO and another about 10 miles SOUTH EAST of UDINE and in conjunction with 12 aircraft of No. 241 SQUADRON, escorting MITCHELLS bombing the CASARSA rail diversion - flying in all 12 sorties. In the afternoon strafing recces near MOTTA - where a reported concentration of 20 plus M.T. was nowhere to be found - and further EAST round UDINE and GORIZIA were not particularly productive for apart from damaging a 3 tonner with a trailer near PALMONOVA a blue 24 seater bus just NORTH of MONTEFALCONE there was no sign of movement on the roads. F/Sgt. 'KILLER' DOYLE had a fortunate escape today when following trouble with his petrol supply from his Long Range Tank he crash landed near the 'drome writing off his kite but escaping himself with a few bruises.

25/03/45

Still using Long Range Tanks we made our furthest penetration of enemy territory to date following the narrow-gauge railway as far as DOBBIACO on the ITALO-AUSTRIAN frontier. Flying up the narrow valley with the snow-capped peaks towering on either side, we had a glorious field day shooting up cars which appeared to be moving along the roads quite oblivious of our presence. It was a most exhilarating experience. A completely uneventful strafing

recce in the PORTOGUARO - PORDENONE - SLIPIMBERGO - area rounded off the day's work and we were then released.

26/03/45

6 pilots were up at 0515 hours ready for a 0545 hours take off to bomb the PORDENONE - CASARSA line but with 10/10ths cloud at 5,000 ft. covering NORTH and NORTH EAST ITALY the show was postponed and we remained at 60 Minutes availability till lunch time when Capt. R. JACOBS took off with 6 aircraft. The line was cratered in two places and a couple of 60 ft. barges were damaged by strafing. On their return the Squadron was released. We were glad to welcome back F/Lt. BEN GARNER who returned today from his Junior Commander Course in MALTA . He appeared to have thoroughly enjoyed the course and perhaps what is more to the point, brought back with him a couple of excellent briar pipes for the I.O. and the E.O.

27/03/45

No flying was possible today owing to a strong EASTERLY gale. However good use was made of the time to celebrate round at No. 601 SQUADRON in the evening the award of the DFC to F/Lt. O.H. JONES who left us a month or two ago to join them.

28/03/45

Squadron at 45 minutes - till shortly after 1100 hours. 8 aircraft were briefed to attack an enemy occupied building at MALALBERGO. But with 10/10ths cloud at 2,000 feet over the target area the attack did not materialize and at 1600 hours the

Squadron was released. A Rugby Football Match was played this afternoon against the RAF REGIMENT XV and were defeated by 16 points to nil by a much stronger side. In the evening many members of the Squadron attended the opening night of the 244 WING TOC H CINEMA.

29/03/45

At 45 Minutes from 0600 hours -- but there was little flying today as heavy cumulus cloud covered most of the NORTH and NORTH EAST ITALY. We were fortunate to get in two attacks - 19 sorties in all - against a school in MALALBERGO - SOUTH of FERRARA reported to be housing at least 300 HUNS! The first attack was marred by three hang ups - though the EAST end of the building was hit - and the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON got permission for a repeat show. But this time there was 9/10ths cumulus from 3/8,000 feet and though the first three managed to bomb successfully through a gap in the cloud and score three direct hits - the second four aircraft were unable to observe the results of their efforts. This finished our work for today and after an early release a trial soccer match was played in preparation for the great game on Saturday. In the evening the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, F/Lt. Commanders and other Officers attended a Party at 244 WING held to celebrate the award of a BAR to the DSO of GROUP CAPTAIN H. DUNDAS, DSO, DFC.

30/03/45

6 aircraft led by F/Lt. B. GARNER were out at first light looking for barges which it was anticipated would be found in the Canal near

LORGO connecting the PO and ADIGE RIVERS as the locks had been damaged by MUSTANGS the previous afternoon. No barges were found in the Canal but 6 x 60 ft. barges moored in the PO not far away were bombed in the face of intense light flak and two of them were destroyed by direct hits. As our aircraft left the weather was closing rapidly from the sea over which there was thick cloud at 1,000 feet and no further flying took place all day.

31/03/45

3 strafing recces of NORTH and NORTH EASTERN ITALY - 14 sorties in all - carried out today but the HUN knows better than to move in daylight on the roads -- and there was little to show apart from the destruction of two small Fiat cars near CERVIGNANO and PALMANOVA, an open 8 seater Staff Car set on fire and 3 occupants killed near UDINE and a 3 tonner damaged near MONTEBELLUNO. At 1530 hours the great return match between the Officers Mess and the Sergeants Mess was played on the 310 S and T ground, and after a keenly fought match in which there was little to choose between the two sides in spite of a vociferous support from the Sergeants Mess from W/O. P. HOOLIHAN (AUS). The game resulted in a draw, 1 goal all. After the match the Officers 'dined and wined' excellently in the Sergeants Mess and a delightful evening's entertainment - profitable for a lucky few - was enjoyed by all.

Ops hours for the month totalled 577 hours 45 min and involved 129 sorties, 58 Non-operational sorties accounted for an additional 32 hrs 35 minutes. 358 x 500lb. bombs - 79.9 ton - were dropped

on operational sorties and our total tonnage to date of bombs dropped is now 546.4 tons.

During the month 1 loco has been damaged, 53 TRG's destroyed and 88 TRG's damaged, 8 M.T., 3 buses, 4 cars and 1 trailer destroyed. 4 M.T., 4 Staff Cars and 3 trailers damaged, 7 barges destroyed and 40 damaged, 4 HDV's destroyed and 25 damaged.

COMMANDING OFFICER'S REMARKS

On the whole, March has been a far better month than February. We have flown nearly double the hours of the previous month and although the majority of the Ops have been similar to those last month (i.e. rail and road interdiction and armed recce) we have had quite reasonable success. But now that the big push is in the offing, the pilots are eager to return to their old job of intensive close support.

The ground crews are keenly awaiting it, too, as then they will have material results for their work.

Intersection soccer has flourished during the month, the notable feature being the three games played by the Sergeants vs. the Officers, all of which were draws, which is probably the only acceptable result.

All the new men have settled in well now, and we are expecting our usual high standard of serviceability in the near future, when we do start flying intensively.

J.E. GASSON MAJOR. Officer Commanding, No. 92 (EI) Squadron,
D.A.F., R.A.F., C.M.F.

01/04/45

An Easter Sunday we shall long remember for in the space of two hours two of our pilots had baled out in the drink – one of them F/O. C. BEASLY – about 20 miles SOUTH of CAORLE – the other Sgt. S. WIDDOWSON – who helped to escort a Catalina to the rescue of F/O. BEASLY – had to bale out 25 miles N.E. of PORTO GARIBALDI. Fortunately the weather was good, the sea calm and both pilots were rescued. ‘HANK’ BEASLY by a Catalina – Sgt. WIDDOWSON by a Walrus. A couple of strafing recces led by F/Lt. B. GARNER and P/O. FRY EAST and SOUTH of UDINE and in the FIUME-TRIESTE area produced a fair dividend – getting between them 2 Staff Cars, 2 3Tonners and an A.F.V. Two pilots, F/Lt. B. GARNER and P/O. J. PARKER, flew over to 285 WING at FORLI in the morning and with the aid of a borrowed Spitfire IX, they carried out an uneventful escort of 2 Tac/R Spitfires of No. 318 Squadron.

02/04/45

Following an attack last night on the ADRIATIC front when MARINE COMMANDOS crossed LAKE COMACCHIO and seized one of two bridges over the RAVENNA- COMACCHIO ROAD, 4 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON destroyed an enemy strong-point in the PORTO GARIBALDI area by excellent bombing and strafing in the face of intense light flak. The C.O. Maj. J. E. GASSON , was hit in the Rad., but by carefully nursing his engine he managed to make base. Another enemy strong-point in the CASTEL SAN PIETRO area received 3 direct hits while in Armed

Recces along the Oil and Barge Route between the mouth of the PIAVE RIVE and TAGLIAMENTA RIVER 3 barges were damaged. GROUP CAPTAIN H. DUNDAS, DSO and BAR, DFC, came to dinner tonight and after glancing round the rather dilapidated E.P.I.P. that form the Mess, congratulated us on being the only squadron to remain fully functional during the winter!

03/04/45

6 aircraft on readiness from 0600 hours — remaining 4 bombed up and at 0720 hours the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON took them against some medium guns near PORTO GARIBALDI. In spite of intense light flak the bombing was excellent - 2 direct hits and 1 near miss being scored on the pits while a house close by hit by the other bomb, blew up in a sheet of flame! As he pulled out of his dive, the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON was hit in the engine by flak but fortunately he was able to make a smart crash landing on the beach about 200 yards our side of the line. After some of our Artillery Men had steadied him with several whiskies, they provided him with transport to the nearest A.O.P. strip and from here he was flown back to base, just in time for a late breakfast! By 0900 hours all available aircraft had been fitted with 90 gallon Long Range Tanks in preparation for a long range escort to ZAGREB — however the weather clamped down, the show was postponed and we were released.

04/04/45

Early in the afternoon we escorted 24 MITCHELLS as far as DRAUBURG in AUSTRIA and saw some excellent bombing of the

bridge there. Unfortunately two of the MITCHELLS collided as they came out from the target and though one crew managed to get out, the other went into the mountain side with their aircraft. Just as we were thinking it was time to ret a release, a close-support show came through — a lovely target — an occupied strong-point on a spit of land out in LAKE COMACCHIO. Had to put up a strong team — F/Lt. B. GARNER, F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN), Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) and F/Lt. P. CANNAM — and the result, 3 hang-ups, and the enemy — it's doubtful if he was there — must have wondered what was going on as SPITFIRES made dive after dive before they could get rid of their bombs. Only 'HUTCH's' bomb came off normally and that scored a near miss in the water.

05/04/45

8 of our aircraft still had 90 gallon LRT's on today when they carried out a couple of escorts to KITTYHAWKS of No. 450 SQUADRON (RAAF) and No. 250 SQUADRON who were bombing and strafing in N.W ITALY and the ISTRIAN PENNINSULAR. On the way back they saw Mediums bombing PORTO GARIBALDI and were vastly impressed by the result. Afterwards 4 pilots put in nearly three hours 'hard sitting' on their dinghies orbited Lt. VENTER (SAAF) of No. SQUADRON who had baled out off TRIESTE for the second time in 3 days! Each time the CATALINA tried to get in heavy shore batteries opened up and drove it off. However late in the day a WARWICK dropped a lifeboat for the pilot and he managed to make good his escape through enemy minefields. A pinpointed Off- and On- loading point for barges at

SAN DONNA DI PIAVE was attacked today and W/O. P. HOOLIHAN (AUS) scored a direct hit with the only bomb that came off — the other 3 were hang-ups which jettisoned after great difficulty. Uneventful dusk patrols — FAENZA- FORLI and FORLI- RAVENNA rounded off the day's work.

06/04/45

8 of our aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, along with 4 aircraft of No. 145 SQUADRON bombed a Methane Gas Plant near MEDICINA damaging it with direct hits and strafing but it was extremely damaged when they arrived and looked pretty derelict. On a close support show late in the day, F/Lt. B. GARNER scored a direct hit on a group of houses at LONGASTRINO just SOUTH of LAKE COMACCHIO, and this coupled with 2 near misses allowed us to get the only results out of a total of 30 sorties flown by the wing against targets in this area. 2 of our aircraft were over at FORLI again today to do an escort to the Tac/R SPITFIRES of No. 40 SQUADRON SAAF.

07/04/45

Guns and enemy strong-points in the ALFONSINE area were smashed by 7 direct hits in a show led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and F/Lt. B. GARNER while an O.P. in a church tower near LANGOSTRINO was narrowly missed — 2 bombs crashing through the nave of the church. A long range strafing recce was abortive but again we sent 2 aircraft over to FORLI to escort Tac/R SPITFIRES of No. 318 SQUADRON. AN unsuccessful A.S.R. search off FANO completed the day's flying.

08/04/45

The target of the day was the reported "G" Ops. of the 162 TURKOMAN DIVISION at LAGO SANTO, but with a gale blowing across the runway it was not until the afternoon that Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) leading 6 aircraft was able to take off and demolish it. 'Hang-ups' marred the success of the only other show of the day led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON against mortar positions near PORTO GARIBALDI. F/Lt. B. GARNER too had to bale out and his story is appended below.

I took off at 1700 hours with two aircraft, identified target at 1715 hours and section went into bomb dive from 8,000 ft bombing to the EAST, breaking up right. My bomb hung up, the second hit the house, third hung up. I told the section that I was gaining height for a second attack and to follow me down in a strafing run. I intended releasing on manual having heard a distinct crack below when I pressed the bomb button and pulled away. I was steady in my bomb dive with one eye on the port cannon muzzle where shells were exploding almost continuously in long yellow flashes — the starboard cannon had jammed when I opened up — when a heavy explosion seemed to envelope the aircraft momentarily forcing me hard down in the seat. The cockpit filled with smoke, nothing could be seen through the canopy and the aircraft seemed to be wallowing drunkenly up to the right. I immediately jettisoned the canopy by pulling it. Bending head forward and hitting it hard at the sides simultaneously with both elbows. I tried to right the aircraft but controls seemed lifeless. So I flung open the cockpit

door pulled pin of harness release, half turned left to free the chute and with both hands on hinge of open door, forced myself up and over the wing root fairing. The aircraft felt on the point of stall immediately before abandoning, when it swept gracefully down in a slow spiral to the right. I did not watch it crash. Once clear of the aircraft I felt for the ripcord, pulled in a shallow diving attitude and almost immediately the chute streamed and opened. There was very little sensation of slipstream on abandoning having retained my helmet oxygen mask and goggles complete to facilitate breathing and as possible protection against fire, which I felt might break out at any moment. My oxygen tube was disconnected and although my R/T plug was 'In' I did not feel it release. Looking down I found myself only just, but far enough over Boche lines, across the canal over PORTO GARIBALDI. Intending to take advantage of the bombing wind I tried slipping the chute out to sea without any visible effect. As a last resort I began slipping hard South to fall in our lines. Miraculously the winds changed and combined with energetic shroud line pulling, I drifted S.W. over from the town and landed light on what appeared to be a square grass field surrounded by salt pans about 2 foot deep. Fortunately I landed as I intended facing the direction of wind, landing light and somersaulting over backwards. During the descent I did not see or hear any one firing at me, fully expecting plenty, but a very friendly SPITFIRE did sweep close by me, causing me to oscillate and spilling air from the canopy. On landing I lay flat in the long grass, shed all flying clothing, and after waiting to see what the Boche would do, I began snaking through the grass as far away

from the flying kit as I could. I reached a small canal at edge of field and hid awhile in a grassy hollow to find out why our guns were shelling just off to one side. From the pinpoints of the bursts I came to a definite conclusion that I was in No-Man's Land and that some of the houses around might be occupied by the Boche.

Landing S. of the canal through GARIBALDI I thought I might be quite safe, but apparently the Army was still enraged in patrolling this area and 'winkling out' enemy elements from the houses South of the canal. So I decided to lie low until early twilight then slipped over a low bank quickly across some small wooden sluice gates and began a belly crawl South along a long narrow gorse covered spit between the water filled salt pans. Mines and my silhouette on the sky line were my main fears. I must have belly crawled some 290/300 yards, stopping to listen frequently making a wide detour around a large group of houses which looked as though they may be enemy occupied and in any case, booby trapped. Until I began my detour out into the marshes I followed new looking dog pad marks in the mud, at least the dog might have been heavy enough to set off any mines. Once by the house, I began walking in a semi circle out of the marsh until I reached a wide canal. I considered swimming this, the marsh water was quite pleasant even though the mud stank unpleasantly. However I decided to walk along the bank until I reached the West bridge. The canal was leading me back again to PORTO GARIBALDI and noticing slit trenches, in the banks, decided to go warily and listen occasionally. Walking along the bank top, I became suspicious of dark forms in the scrub at the bottom of the bank and as I walked by looked down again when

one of the forms whispered “Halt” quite alarmingly. I stopped all in good time for they were pointing Tommies at me and told then I was a pilot. They told me to come down the bank, where we exchanged identities — themselves SCOTS GUARDS — I the pilot whose whereabouts and possible activities they already knew. Apparently the GUARDS were an out going fighting patrol. I was ferried across the canal, taken to company H.Q. where particulars of contact were phoned to No. 244 WING. From there I was Jeeped to brigade, thence to Divisional H.Q. (Black Cat sign and No. 40) where I stared overnight. I was jeeped back to my Unit the following morning after a very fine breakfast. It was quite good fun really. The Army Units from the boys in the line up to Div. H.Q. were magnificent, quick on the trigger, maybe, but magnificent hosts. Indeed I felt embarrassed being looked after, almost mothered, by so fine a bunch as these in 58 Div. In passing I cannot account for the explosion which occurred. No flak was seen. The army units reported a big brownish burst beneath and behind me, but saw no bomb burst afterwards. The aircraft cashed within 20 yards of a SCOTS GUARD, but did not explode. I watched it catch fire after a while when ammo began exploding and tanks went up. The wreckage burned for quite a long time. The bomb may be under the wreckage or failed to explode. In my opinion I was either hit by a mortar shell, or artillery fire.

09/04/45

The 8th Army campaign to destroy the German Armies In Italy opened today — the crossing of the RIVER SENIO being preceded

by a heavy assault of over 800 LIBERATORS who dropped over 175,000 fragmentation bombs on enemy troop concentrations in the battle area and by systematic attacks by the DESERT AIR FORCE on pinpoint targets and TIMOTHY's on selected areas. We followed an attack on Tiger tanks concealed in houses in the MASSA LOMBARDA area when 1 direct hit and 1 very near miss were scored and two aircraft severely shot up by intense light flak; by an 11 aircraft 'TIMOTHY' led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) and Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) on FUSIGNANO when enemy strong-points were heavily damaged, 1 direct hit and 8 near misses. Enemy troops dug in along the banks of the RIVER SENIO were then strafed through the haze and dust of the battle. Our last show was in conjunction with No. 241 Squadron when enemy positions in COTTIGNOLA received a direct hit and 4 near misses. Our aircraft were unable to strafe as our own artillery recommenced their shelling a minute or two early. A pity for the success of a TIMOTHY depends on perfect timing, and both today and on subsequent days the Army tended to open up again before the aircraft had completed their operations. Still between the DESERT AIR FORCE and the HEAVIES the enemy was well 'softened up' and when the 8th ARMY crossed the RIVER SENIO at 1930 hrs they did so with negligible casualties.

10/04/45

We were hard at it again today blasting two Nebelwerfer batteries, one near ST. AGATA, the other close to FUSIGNANO — and operating under ROVER control — though in most cases he had no

targets for them and they bombed their secondary targets. The most successful show of the day was the last when the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and W/O. D. MANNION recceing the MASSA LOMBARDA area each dropped his bombs into separate gun pits in which the guns were clearly visible. My the end of the day LUGO, COTTIGNOLA and FUSIGNANO had been freed.

11/04/45

Our targets today were chiefly in the MASSA LOMBARDA and CONSELICE areas in the Central Sector and LONGASTRINO near the shores of LAKE COMACCHIO where a brilliant attack on an enemy strong-point, a pumping station, led by Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) completely saved the day for some of our MARINE COMMANDOS. In a letter written later to GROUP CAPTAIN H. DUNDAS, DSO BAR, DFC, Maj. P.R. MATTERS, No. 40 ROYAL MARINE COMMANDOS said "I would like to thank the pilots of the 4 SPITFIRES who bombed and shot up the MENATE pumping station at about 0900 hours on Apr. 11th. This action had the effect of subduing an enemy strong-point which was causing severe casualties to this Unit and Materially helped us to get forward to our objective. If we have to call for such support again we hope to dial the same number. And the GROUP CAPTAIN in passing on this letter wrote to the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, " Johnie — For your information; I think you know about this already, actually — Good old 92" In support of our troops advancing to the RIVER SANTERMO an Artillery H.Q 2 miles S.E. of CONSELICE was badly damaged by 3 very near misses which fell in a cluster about

5 yards from the side of the house and F/Lt. B. GARNER who was leading followed this up with an attack on two S.P. guns which he spotted moving along towards the town. After repeated hits one of the guns blew up and was left burning while the other was severely damaged! Late in the day he followed this up by scoring 2 very near misses on a house in the same area where another S.P. gun was sheltering. LONGOASTRINO also came in for further attention when a four led by F/Lt. D. ALING scored 3 direct hits on a cluster of farm buildings which the enemy was using as a strong-point, and another four led by Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) was demolished by 3 direct hits. Trenches dug along the North bank of the RENO were strafed and W/O. P. HOOLIHAN (AUS) silenced a gun-post which shortly before had hit him with 20 mm flak. 'HOOLIE' got back to base alright but the aircraft was Cat.2. Stiff enemy resistance to the NEW ZEALAND DIV, lined up across the SANTERNO came from MASSA LOMBARDA but this was effectively softened by a 'TIMOTHY' led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON, when 4 direct hits were scored on a row of houses, while the other two bombs also hit houses in the area. Two direct hits by F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN) and F/S B. BARTON destroyed an enemy mortar position S.E. of the same town. But their magnificent results were not achieved without loss for while making an attack on an enemy strong-point near MASSA LOMBARDA, P/O. 'PETE' SMITH's bomb explode either just as, or just before it left the aircraft, and his aircraft was blown to pieces. His loss is a grievous one for he was a very likeable fellow and of sterling character. His operational tour

had been done easily and it is sad to think that the next day he was to go O.T.E.

12/04/45

Until lunch time our aircraft were busy doing Armed Recces to the rear of the battle area. In the early morning operating independently in section of 2 aircraft, we found a considerable amount of M.T. and H.D.V. movement behind the lines and came back with 1 M.T. flamer, 2 troop carriers and 24 H.D.V.'s damaged. Later in the morning W/O. P. HOOLIHAN (AUS) after scoring a very near miss on a large camouflaged tank near MEDICINA followed it up with a strafing run and was hit for the second time in two days but managed to force land safely at PORLI — aircraft Cat. 2. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) took 6 aircraft off in the afternoon to MASSA LOMBARDA where enemy infantry, forming up for a counter attack, were attacked. 4 direct hits — each on separate houses — followed by 3 strafing runs left the area demolished and burning! Then with the weather closing in from the West and rain clouds sweeping across the sky, Capt. R. JACOBS's six in the face of intense light and heavy flak dropped bombs on the village of SAN BIAGO - ARGENTA where the enemy was offering fierce opposition to our advancing troops.

13/04/45

A great day for the Squadron, brilliant Tac/R work by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) near SESTO IMOLESE when he personally pinpointed the positions of 5 TIGER TANKS — camouflaged and concealed behind houses — was fully exploited by Capt. R.

JACOBS, Sgt. S. WIDDOWSON, W/O. P. HOOLIHAN, and F/S. J. BURROWS who destroyed 1 Tank with 2 direct hits and after damaging 2 more Tiger Tanks with 2 very near misses, strafed them as they lumbered along to seek shelter under some trees and blew one of them up and left the other severely damaged and smoking. Meanwhile 4 more aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON swept to the attack and a very near miss by F/O. C. BEASLY blew a Tiger Tank over the side of the canal bank along which it was moving and left it lying at an angle of 60 degrees with the gun muzzle in the mud. Telegrams of congratulations which came in later from the NEW ZEALAND DIV., credited us with 4 TIGER TANKS destroyed! Apart from all this, excellent work was done in an early morning TIMOTHY led by F/Lt. B. GARNER and P/O. R. FRY when several houses North of SESTO IMOLESE were demolished and strafing runs were made along the West Bank of the SILLARO where enemy infantry were dug in. Other strong-points in the area were demolished by direct hits while W/O. A. MICHEL (AUS) destroyed a heavy field gun towed by five horses which was seen moving towards ARGENTA by a direct hit which left the gun burning fiercely by the side of the road. Tac/R Spits directed other aircraft on the same show to CONSANDOLO reporting five horse drawn guns moving into the village but these on close investigation proved to be H.D.V's and after bombing in the face of intense light flak, the aircraft returned to base, landing at dusk. Today P/O. P.G.H. DAVIS and P/O. R. S. HEDGER reported for flying duties.

14/04/45

There was plenty of cloud over the battle area today but not enough to prevent the systematic destruction of enemy strong-points along the length of the battle front. Occupied buildings at CASTEL GUELFO were severely damaged by two direct hits while three others between SESTO IMOLESE and MEDICINA were attacked by 6 aircraft led by Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) disintegrated as a result of 6 direct hits — a big explosion with flame and black smoke up to 1,000 feet following F/O. D. STEVENSON's bomb! A 12 aircraft 'TIMOTHY' led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON in the morning added to the already heavy destruction in SESTO IMOLESE while a very successful last light attack led by F/Lt. B. GARNER on SAN BIAGIO where the enemy were still resisting strongly at the entrance to the ARGENTA GAP left three houses burning and two more severely damaged.

15/04/45

During the morning 18 sorties were flown against enemy occupied buildings SESTO IMOLESE – SAN BIAGIO – and ARGENTA areas – all targets being badly damaged by direct hits and very near misses. An Armed Recce of FERRARA and the PO DELTA provided no suitable targets so a road bridge over one of the entrances of the PO near FORMIGNANO was bombed. This day was rounded off by a 12 aircraft 'TIMOTHY' against SESTO IMOLESE where enemy resistance was still strong. Out of a row of 5 houses which the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) chose as the target for his 'six'. 3 were completely demolished and a fourth severely damaged by 3 direct

hits and 3 very near misses while 2 other houses in the area were severely damaged by direct hits and near misses and a big fire left burning outside one of them.

16/04/45

This afternoon great destruction was wreaked on enemy transport, guns and heavy equipment which was found withdrawing from the MEDICINA area. The C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) who with F/O. C. BEASLY, F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN) W/O. D. MANNION, W/O. J. PEACOCK and Sgt. J. DOYLE had just blown up a house containing Nebelwerfers with 5 direct hits were the first on to it, to be joined later by F/O. D. STEVESON, P/O. R. HEDGER, W/O. P. HOOLIHAN (AUS) and Sgt. T. HODGKINSON. In all 1 light tank was destroyed, 1 damaged, 4 guns destroyed, 2 damaged, 4 M.T. destroyed, flamers and 7 damaged, 1 armoured car destroyed and 2 troop carriers full of troops severely damaged, 5 ammo carriers destroyed and 6 damaged and an H.D.V. laden with troops severely damaged - all Cat-2, while W/O. P. HOOLIHAN (AUS) was hit in his bomb dive and set on fire was last heard saying that he was going to force land "on the HUN side of the line I think" Whether he managed to get the kite down successfully and was taken prisoner we don't know. All we do know is that later when the MEDICINA - BUDRIO area was freed of enemy troops Capt. R. JACOBS and F/Lt. R. GALVAN spent a whole day searching for traces of him and his aircraft. But we still hope he will turn up one day, for he was a fine fellow — a real fighter who never spared himself and was ready to take on anything. Today Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) went

O.T.E. — much to his disgust for he says he feels anything but clapped!

17/04/45

We commenced another busy day with an Armed Recce of the Battle Area led by F/Lt. B. GARNER. Very intense light flak was directed against our aircraft from enemy positions along the RENO RIVER but 6 M.T. were strafed and damaged in the BUDRIO area. 3 large guns were damaged near CASTEL SAN PIETRO as a result of a bombing attack led by P/O. R. FRY, while occupied buildings near ARGENTA were severely damaged by 3 direct hits and 3 near misses in two attacks led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) and F/Lt. B. GARNER. An infantry position in the same area was bombed by F/Lt. D. ALING and 3 bombs fell on and around a big mound covered in clay soil. Today Sgt. STILWELL on his first ops trip was hit by 20mm flak as he pulled out of his bomb dive and though wounded in the leg he brought his damaged aircraft back to base. A very fine show!

18/04/45

By today — as a result of heavy battle casualties — Wing Repair being 'Chock-a-block' with Q.J. kites - and no replacements for Spit VIII's — we had 8 aircraft at our disposal with 4 of them on readiness state — only 4 aircraft were available for bombing shows . Two attacks were made on gun positions in the OSSA del EMILIA area under the leadership of F/Lt. D. ALING and F/Lt. P. CANNAM — and on each occasion the target area was well covered. ROVER DAVID also directed the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON onto some guns

which he said were either in or near a farmhouse in the MEDICINA area. While 2 aircraft attacked a possible camouflaged gun position nearby, the other two bombed the house itself and F/Sgt. R. COWAN's bomb scored a direct hit, reducing the place to rubble! Dusk patrols between ARGENTA and PORTO GARIBALDI and ARGENTA and CASTEL SAN PIETRO were uneventful.

19/04/45

With the POLISH CORP pressing the enemy back onto the ADICE line on the South Western portion of the line, all targets for today were in the CASTEL SAN PIETRO and CASTENOVA areas. We started well when an 8 aircraft show led by F/Lt. B. GARNER and P/O. R. FRY against strong-points in the CASTEL SAN PIETRO area left two groups of houses severely damaged and blazing furiously as a result of direct hits and 2 very near misses. Later in the day empty mortar pits near CASTENOSA were bombed under ROVER DAVID's direction while F/Lt. D. ALING who was directed onto an S.P. gun in some farm building in the same area left them heavily damaged — two bombs scoring direct hits, the other two, very near misses. Three houses occupied by enemy troops in the same sector of the front also received damage from direct hits and near misses. The customary Armed Recce well behind the enemy lines in the middle of the afternoon as far WEST as MIRNDOLA - NORTH of OSTIGLIA and EAST along the PO to ROVIGO — found no suitable targets either to bomb or strafe. P/O. P. DAVIS who has attracted enemy flak on several occasions recently and got away with it each time, was this morning forced to crash land near CASEL SAN

PIETRO. Picking a suitable field, he put his kite down nicely and after being entertained by the POLISH CORP was back with us just after lunch little the worse for his adventures

20/04/45

4 aircraft led by F/O. D. STEVENSON on a First Light Armed Recce from FERRARA, EAST to the PO delta after bombing a road junction near FERRARA, damaged some M.T. and destroyed a couple of 'Tedeschi' motor cyclists near FOMIGNANO and returned quite pleased with themselves. Two enemy strong-points in the CASTENOSA area were severely damaged, while a third was left blazing with black smoke rising to 2,000 ft. After attacks by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) and F/Lt. B. GARNER the aircraft bombed a sunken bridge over the RENO to the N.W. of MOLINELLA and strafed several M.T. in the same area, while later in the afternoon P/O. S. SMITH attacked a petrol bowser leaving it blazing furiously while other aircraft of the same section damaged an S.P. gun, an armoured car and a Volkswagen all in the area just to the NORTH of OSTELLATO - FERRARA main road. In the evening targets about 8 miles N.E. of BOLOGNA were attacked — the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's 'four' after demolishing a house containing machine gun nests with two direct hits, strafed enemy troops holding the EAST bank of the ADICE. F/Lt. D. ALING's 'six' returning home after inflicting severe damage on a cluster of enemy occupied houses was diverted by 'Commander' to attack 40 plus M.T. on the BOLOGNA - FERRARA road near MALALBERGO. As might have been expected the light flack was intense and a

direct hit just as F/Lt. ALING was going in to strafe blew the gun panel out of the port wing and left a gaping hole in it, 'bigger than that'. All aircraft made night landings and as several squadrons had been out after the same target there was more fun than that in the circuit. This by the way was F/Lt. ALING's first trip as Flight Commander of 'A' Flight and in congratulating him on his appointment we hope that in the future he will show a little more care for the aircraft which F/O. J. LONGSTAFF, the Flights and Maintenance Personnel are working their hearts out to provide you with!

21/04/45

8 aircraft — operating in two fours — led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and F/Lt. B. GARNER were out at first light this morning combine the area between FERRARA and the PO DELTA. Apart from intense light flak from the FERRARA area which, holed the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON's aircraft (every time that F/O. LONGSTAFF gets the C.O.'s kite serviceable he takes it up for one trip and brings it back Cat. 2.) the first four had little to report, but F/Lt. B. GARNER had more luck and locating 3 Armoured cars near SAN GIOVANI^AMI destroyed two of them as well as damaging a car moving into town from the SOUTH. It was good to hear F/Lt. GARNER come back and report 5 tanks across Highway 9 to the WEST of BOLOGNA and speeding NORTH, BOLOGNA itself having fallen to the POLISH CORP and the AMERICANS at 0700 hours this morning. In the middle of the morning a strong cross wind sprang up making the 'drome unserviceable and F/O. R.

HUTCHINSON (CAN) section of 4 aircraft after damaging an enemy strong-point, was forced to land at CERVIA and though they were able to return in the afternoon, no further flying took place. In the evening Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) provided a large cask of Vino for the Airmen's Mess and a happy party followed. We were sorry today to lose F/Lt. P. CANNAM who has been posted to No. 241 SQUADRON as FLIGHT COMMANDER — but he takes with him our best wishes.

22/04/45

Everything conspired to make an attack on a tank sheltering in a farmhouse midway between FERRARA and COPPARO unsuccessful but an Armoured Personnel Tractor near RO was severely damaged and a light tank was left in flames. Later in the morning owing to the fluid nature of the battle and the lack of exact information as to the whereabouts of our forward elements, P/O. R. FRY was told to attack any targets South of the RIVER PO, but in the afternoon the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON directed by ROVER PADDY to recce the BONDENO area bombed 3 three tonners — F/Sgt. R. COWAN destroying one with a direct hit — while the other 2 were severely damaged by a near miss and strafing. Shortly after ROVER stopped all bombing and strafing in the area and the remaining two aircraft dropped their bombs North of the PO and a little bridge over a canal. With cloud down to 500 feet over the area and with a heavy bank of 10/10ths rain cloud to the EAST and NORTH EAST, operations for the day ceased. We were delighted today to learn that the C.O. Had been awarded a BAR to his DFC

and that F/Lt. B. GARNER had won the DFC. We congratulate W/O. J. PEACOCK on his promotion to P/O.

23/04/45

Rather a barren day — plenty of guns, tanks and M.T. South of the PO and moving NORTH but owing to danger of strafing our own troops, all Armed Recces were NORTH of the PO. Ranging from LEGNANO - OSTIGLIA - ROVIGO - PADUA - MESTRE they brought us little dividend apart from a number of H.D.V's destroyed and a Volkswagen damaged near ESTE where both P/O. J. PARKER and P/O. R. DAVIS were shot up by very accurate light flak. In the evening however ROVER PADDY directed 6 of our aircraft led by F/Lt. D. ALING to attack a row of enemy occupied buildings between COPPARO and the PO CROSSING at CRESPINO and in spite of a barrage of intense light flak, two direct hits and two near misses did extensive damage. Today S/Ldr. CASSIDY was posted from H.Q. 244 WING for flying duties, supernumerary.

24/04/45

One of our most successful strafing days, for following the destruction of a TIGER TANK sheltering near a church tower close to the RIVER PO, NORHT EAST of FERRARA by 4 aircraft led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) a concentration of enemy M.T. trapped in the RO pocket, SOUTH of the River Crossing at POLESELLA was attacked leaving 5 M.T. flamers and 12 M.T. and 3 A.F.V's damaged. The C.O. Maj. J. E. GASSON and F/O. D. STEVENSON followed this up on a Last Light patrol by bagging a 10 tonner petrol bowser which became a sheet of flame about 100

yards along the road and 3 M.T. — all 6 tonners and all flamers — and damaging 4 M.T. and 1 troop carrier in the same area. F/Lt. B. GARNER found a huge concentration of M.T. in CORSOLA waiting to cross the RIVER PO by ferry, and followed by his No. 2, F/Sgt. B. BARTON, he did a strafing run in face of intense light flak right down the main street which was packed with double lines of transport nose to tail!!!! He then called up 'Commander' and medium bombers of 232 WING were on their way to the target 40 minutes later — and what a target!

25/04/45

A dull day — a series of Armed Recces in the ROVIGO - PADUA - VENICE - CHIOGGIA area found nothing of interest so road bridges over dykes and canals just NORTH of the PO were bombed, but as the bombs carried instantaneous fusing, results were negligible. A few M.T. were found and dealt with appropriately but generally speaking it was a day of barren results.

26/04/45

Early this morning F/O. R. HUTCHINSON (CAN) finding no suitable targets North of the RIVER ADIGE (he was expressly told to attack nothing SOUTH of the River) attacked his secondary target — a METHANE GAS PLANT at SAGNIRO, SOPRE and with 5 direct hits got two large fires going in the storage area and left the compressor plant severely damaged — one of the few times that an attack on a Methane Plant produced any tangible results! A later mission by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON (SAAF) bombed a bridge over the canals in the CAVAZERE area while F/Lt. B. GARNER

attacked a group of buildings on the SOUTH bank of the RIVER ADIGE — a few miles NORTH EAST of ROVIGO where there were a number of loading stages and where a ferry was seen moving across. But it was not until the evening patrols that things really happened. Led by F/O. D. STEVENSON, F/Sgt. T. HODGKINSON, F/Sgt. J. BURROWS and F/Sgt. S. WIDDOWSON between them destroyed 4 M.T. and damaged 18 others as well as shooting up a ferry, damaging 4 motor cyclists — all in a little area N.W. of ROVIGO. Meanwhile near CAVAZERE the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON DSO, DFC (SAAF), W/O. D. MANNION, P/O. J. PEACOCK and Sgt. RICHARDSON bagged 8 M.T. flamers, 12 M.T. damaged, 1 medium tank damaged and 6 O.D.V's destroyed. A battery of 4 x 20mm guns which were giving trouble were silenced by W/O. D. MANNION!

27/04/45

No flying took place owing to stormy weather and low cloud — until late in the afternoon when P/O. R. FRY took out a four and was directed by ROVER PADDY to the CAVAZERE area where an enemy strong-point in a house was severely damaged by two direct hits and two near misses. F/Lt. B. GARNER who with P/O. J. PARKER each led a pair of aircraft did a strafing recce in the CARCERI area — a few miles S.W. of ESTE and severely damaged 7 M.T. and destroyed several ODV's. A great day for news. PARTISANS liberate N.W. ITALY, MUSSOLINI captured and executed and first official report of the liking of the ALLIED ARMIES at TORGAU in CENTRAL GERMANY! F/Lt. D. WRIGHT

who is now O.T.E. proceeded on attachment to No. 15 COMMAND J.S.A.A.F. Capt. R. JACOBS (SAAF) who went O.T.E. on the 16th of APRIL left us today for ADVANCED S.A.A.F. T.C. at BARI, we wish him all the best during his well deserved rest in the UNION.

28/04/45

Still stormy weather and not until lunch time were we called on — then two 'fours' led by the C.O. Maj. J.E. GASSON and F/Lt. D. ALING both under ROVER JACK control were asked to recce the PADUA area. As, however, the cloud base was down to 2,000 feet the aircraft got rid of their bombs in the CONSELICE area and then attacked M.T. getting three M.T. flamers and damaging two more. NEW ZEALANDERS were seen advancing rapidly NORTH and NORTH EAST from ESTE towards PADUA and as it happened this was the last day of the ITALIAN CAMPAIGN that we were to carry bombs.

29/04/45

By this morning PADUA had been occupied by the NEW ZEALANDER and along with 56 DIV. they were advancing rapidly in the direction of MESTRE. With the enemy completely disorganised close support was neither necessary nor possible so we were ordered to take off racks and fit 45 gallon Long Range Tanks and late in the afternoon two strafing recces were carried out EAST of the RIVER PIAVE. Out of 6 M.T. nose to tail near BORDENONE, 3 were left in flames and 2 damaged while 3 M.T. in the ODERZO area (over which a huge ITALIAN flag was seen waving) were damaged. A long column of our troops was seen up

to the PIAVE and stretched out along the MESTRE – SAN DONNA road — indicative of the speed of the advance and the complete route of the enemy.

30/04/445

This morning we flew 16 sorties looking for remnants of the German Army fleeing NORTH along the PIAVE towards BELLUNO and up into the mountains near GEMONA. Little was found to strafe though a pretty burst by F/O. STEVENSON disposed of a grey staff car North of CODROIPO. Rows of burned out transport were seen along the VITTORIO VENTO ROAD proof of the enormous destruction wrought by the wing fighter bombers the previous evening previous evening. Unfortunately F/O. STEVENSON picked up a stray bullet and had to crash land up in the mountains near LAGO SANTA CROCE. He made a nice wheels up landing and called up from the ground to say that he was alright. We hope to see him back in a few days. Ops hours for the month totalled 714 hours and 15 minutes and comprised 129 sorties. 99 non operational sorties accounted for an additional 44 hours 2 minutes. 541 x 500 lb bombs approx. 120 tons were dropped on operational sorties and our total tonnage of bombs dropped is now approx 667 tons. During the month 5 tanks (4 of them Tigers) were destroyed and 6 (including 2 Tigers) were damaged; 5 A.F.V were destroyed and 14 were damaged, 13 guns destroyed, 5 damaged, 41 M.T. destroyed 107 damaged, 12 trailers destroyed, 4 damaged, 11 M/C's destroyed, 9 damaged, 33 T.R.G.'s and 5 barges damaged and 14 H.D.V's damaged.

REMARKS OF COMMANDING OFFICER

The report for this month has been so fully covered, I feel it unnecessary for me to make any further comment.

01/05/45

Poured with rain all day. At 1200 hours we learned that all organized resistance had ceased in ITALY and the WING was moving to TREVISO, 'A' Party leaving at 0800 hours tomorrow. Our last operational mission of the campaign was flown today when F/Lt. B. GARNER, DFC took 4 aircraft on a Shipping Recce of the TRIESTE area where there was considerable activity. 9 miles WEST of the harbour a large barge was seen burning furiously and shortly after 1300 hours 3 large motor vessels were seen coming out of the harbour where they joined two other vessels. Late in the afternoon a full scale attack was made on these enemy ships by MUSTANGS and P.47's. F/O. J. LONGSTAFF was today posted to 253 WING.